

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

QOH [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is QOH [REDACTED]. I was born QOH [REDACTED] which is the name on my birth certificate and is also the name I went by up until I left Quarriers in 1978. That was when my name was changed to QOH [REDACTED] when my mum remarried. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I don't recall much of my time as a toddler. I was born in Bootle, Liverpool and over the period of my early life we lived there as well as Edinburgh and maybe Glasgow as well. There may have been other places but I don't remember them. I do recall however that we tended to move about a lot. My mother was called [REDACTED] then [REDACTED] by marriage. My birth father was [REDACTED].
3. I have six siblings who are [REDACTED] now aged 59, QDK [REDACTED] who is 58, [REDACTED] 56, [REDACTED] is 52, [REDACTED] is 51 and [REDACTED] is 50. I will be 54 later this year and I am in the middle of my siblings as far as age is concerned.
4. My mum was hospitalised on various occasions mainly as a result of my father being a brutal man who assaulted her on many an occasion. It was for this reason that me and my siblings were eventually taken into care, often being taken for our own safety.

5. At the time the extended family were of the view that my mother had made her bed and could lie in it. My granny was willing to take my mum in but not us kids because her husband wouldn't like that.
6. I only have fleeting memories of my dad and strangely one of the memories I always had was of him playing hide and seek with me. Years later, perhaps when I was about forty, I learned that on that occasion he was actually holding us all hostage and threatening to kill us all with the police being outside. He apparently released us one at a time and I was last to be released. The strange thing is that I don't recall that as a traumatic experience. My memory was that it was a game.
7. I have no memory of social workers being involved in my early life though that may be because of how young I was. I do know that I was placed somewhere when I was very young because I have a newspaper cutting that contains a photo of me in a children's home though I don't recall it or where it was taken, perhaps Morningside in Edinburgh. I have no memories of being there.
8. The first memory I have of being in care was when I stayed in Bonnyrigg with Mr and Mrs LXN-LXO who had two teenage daughters, one of whom was called [REDACTED]. I don't recall how old the LXN-LXO were or if either of them worked. I don't recall the address but I could probably point out the house as I later married a man from Bonnyrigg and it's not that big a place.
9. I was aged four or five when I moved into Bonnyrigg and I was there for a few months, maybe as long as a year. I know I had also been in other places but I have no recollection of them. My siblings QDK and [REDACTED] moved in with the LXN-LXO at the same time as me then my sister [REDACTED] joined us after a while.

The [LXN-LXO], Bonnyrigg

10. There was a bedroom downstairs with a single bed and a cot in it. I think there were two bedrooms upstairs so it was quite cramped with the four of them and us three. While we were there, the [LXN-LXO] also fostered another boy who always seemed to be treated better than us. Of course, thereafter my sister [REDACTED] also arrived. Myself and my siblings would take turns in sharing the bed upstairs with the [LXN-LXO] daughters.

11. I don't recall much else about the house other than it had a living room and the kitchen was tiny.

Routine at the [LXN-LXO], Bonnyrigg

12. I don't recall what the routine was about getting up or what time it was we went to bed.

Mealtimes / Food

13. The only thing I remember about the food there was that we got porridge. We would get porridge in the morning and again at teatime. If we were at school we would get a school lunch but if we were at home we went hungry. That's one of the things I recall most about that house, we were always hungry. If we were out on our own we would scavenge for whatever we could get even picking chewing gum off the ground and taking shots each of chewing it.
14. If the [LXN-LXO] were eating they normally shut us outside the house so we were often freezing. I still struggle to understand why the neighbours didn't say anything. They must have seen the state we were in.
15. There was a couple who moved in nearby and their garden was overflowing with rhubarb. The woman used to give us the rhubarb with sugar because she felt sorry

for us. Years later I recall my mother-in-law, who stayed in Bonnyrigg, recounting a story of how she used to give such things to three hungry children. I think it was us she was talking about but I never elaborated it with her.

16. After [REDACTED] arrived the [REDACTED] LXN-LXO used to give her bits of toast and would let us take her out in her pram. We were so hungry that we would steal wee bits of [REDACTED] s toast.
17. Sometimes we would go up to the local shops and one of the shopkeepers used to give us some drinks for nothing. It must have been obvious to him and others that we were starving. We were all very thin and clearly undernourished.

Washing / bathing

18. I don't really remember having a bath but nor do I recall not having a bath. It's just something that hasn't stuck in my memory.

Clothing / uniform

19. Other than a really bright dress that I had I don't recall how we were dressed or who gave us our clothes. The thing I recall about that dress was having some chewing gum in my mouth and being scared the [REDACTED] LXN-LXO would see it so I put it in the pocket of the dress. However, then I was terrified that it would stick to the dress and I was frightened I would be punished.

School

20. I don't recall what school we went to though I do remember that the Protestant and Catholic school were beside each other. We went to the Catholic school and had to pass the Protestant school and I remember it was like having to run the gauntlet every day. Another thing I remember about school was that we used to constantly steal the school milk. I have no memory of who my teacher was or anybody asking us how we were.

Trips / Holidays

21. I remember that on one occasion we once went somewhere, maybe a funfair, in Bonnyrigg where there were horses because one of the daughters loved to ride them. Mrs L XO put me up on one of the horses and I was terrified. It was like sitting on a skyscraper. I was screaming but she wouldn't let me off it. , one of the daughters, led me round on the horse with me screaming all the time. It was awful. That's a memory that is still clear to me to this day.

Birthdays and Christmas

22. I have no recollection of how our birthdays or Christmas were celebrated or if they even were. If they were celebrated they must have been pretty non-eventful for me not to remember them.

Visits / Inspections

23. My mum visited us on one occasion. The reason I remember it so well was that, not only were we constantly starving but we were all incredibly thirsty. My mum managed to get us up on to the stainless steel sink and allowed us to drink as much as we could. That water tasted like nectar to us.
24. I have no recollection of social workers ever visiting us except on our last day. It's possible that social workers did come to the house and maybe we just didn't get to see them.

Healthcare

25. I have no recollection of going to either a doctor or a dentist other than being taken to the doctor on the day the social workers took us from the LXN-L XO .

Running away

26. I have no recollection of ever running away from the [LXN-LXO] but, given how young I was, I think it's unlikely that I would have. Then again, I wouldn't have had anywhere to run to. We did go out and wander about quite a lot but I wouldn't count that as running away as we always returned.

Bed Wetting

27. I don't recall being a bed wetter though my sisters say that some of them wet the bed.

Abuse at The [LXN-LXO], Bonnyrigg

28. Living with the [LXN-LXO] was awful. We were always hungry and cold, especially when they put us outside when they were eating. They also smacked us on a regular basis, the daughters as well. When we took turns to sleep with the sisters they would punch and kick us if we moved while in the bed.
29. The fact that the sisters used to assault me when I was in their bed has stayed with me to this day and, if I am in close proximity to somebody, I can't help but fidget.
30. The [LXN-LXO] used to tie my brothers hand to the cot when he was sleeping in it and if I shared the single bed with my sister they would put pillows down the middle of the bed and tell us "not to touch each other".
31. There was one occasion when my sister [QDK] was about seven. She used to have to look after the rest of us when the [LXN-LXO] went out. We were always hungry and thirsty and I remember [QDK] trying to make us toast one time but she burnt it. When it burnt, the toast went on fire but [QDK] couldn't reach it.

32. We somehow got the toast out of the toaster and put the flames out. I think [REDACTED] lifted QDK [REDACTED] to get it out. However, the toast was like black ash but we were so hungry that we put margarine on it and ate it. When the LXN-LXO [REDACTED] came back we had ash all over our mouths and teeth and Mrs LXO [REDACTED] started shouting at us calling us dirty.
33. I was terrified and ran into the bedroom and was so scared I wet myself. Mrs LXO [REDACTED] came in and smacked me on the legs which, because my legs were wet from having wet myself, was agony.
34. If we were in the living room we were put behind the couch. If we moved or made even the slightest noise either Mr or Mrs LXN-LXO [REDACTED] or one of the daughters would slap us.
35. On one occasion I was outside while the LXN-LXO [REDACTED] ate and it was freezing. I fell and cut my thigh and was screaming. Mr and Mrs LXN-LXO [REDACTED] put me in a shed that the dog used and I was terrified because I had been bitten by a dog only a few weeks previous.
36. The dog didn't bite me and I was so tired that I actually fell asleep leaning on the dog. I don't recall if the LXN-LXO [REDACTED] locked the door of the hut or not. Despite the fact I had a nasty cut on my thigh I received no medical treatment.
37. My whole memory of that house was being in fear and having to stay out of the way of all the LXN-LXO [REDACTED]. We learned to stay still, to stay out of the way, that way we avoided getting any slaps.
38. Mr and Mrs LXN-LXO [REDACTED] slapped us regularly but the daughters often punched and kicked us and shouted at us. I think a lot of the daughter's aggression came from having to share their bed with us.

Reporting of abuse at the [LXN-LXO], Bonnyrigg

39. I personally didn't report the abuse from the [LXN-LXO] to anybody as I was too young but the fact that the social workers took us away at short notice and given the condition we were in would suggest that somebody had reported it.

Leaving the [LXN-LXO], Bonnyrigg

40. One day social workers picked us all up and took us to a doctor. We had lice, scabies and were mal-nourished, underweight and dehydrated. I don't actually recall this but have been told it by my mum and older sister. When the social workers picked us up they told us not to tell the [LXN-LXO] that we wouldn't be going back to them.
41. I'm sure we left not long after our mum had visited us so I suppose it's possible that we left because of complaints that she had made. My recollection of leaving the [LXN-LXO] was that we were sneaked out of the house. After we went to the doctor I don't know if we went back to our mum's or went straight to Quarriers.

Quarriers, Bridge of Weir

42. It was [REDACTED] 1971 when we arrived at Quarriers so I was nearly six and stayed there for almost seven years. My first memory of Quarriers was being introduced to another child called [QKT]. She was about seven and I recall she was wearing black leather hot pants which, looking back, was wholly inappropriate.
43. [QKT] took me to the park and I thought the place was wonderful. It was me, [QDK] and [REDACTED] who went to Quarriers together, my brother [REDACTED] had been adopted. I don't recall where [REDACTED] was at that time but she joined us at Quarriers later as did [REDACTED]

44. Quarriers was a self-contained village that had parks, a tuck shop, a hospital, a school, a church, a baby unit and an epilepsy centre. It had loads of open spaces and trees and looked lovely. The place looked stunning and they had their own gardeners. Mr Minto was the director and his wife was one of the teachers.
45. I was so happy that here was another girl, QKT [REDACTED] who was willing to show me around but I don't recall if QDK [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] came with us. I don't recall much else about my first day there other than I actually thought it was a safe environment.
46. We were put into Cottage 17 which was run by QNZ [REDACTED] who was the house mother. She had some women who would come in to help her and I recall Mrs Glassford, Aunty Carol, Aunty Lorna and Aunty Betty. Aunty was the term we knew them all by. They weren't there all the time but I would say that Mrs Glassford was there the most.
47. The buildings were called cottages but in reality each one was a mansion. At the top of the stairs was a big airing cupboard with a bedroom next to it and next to that was a toilet. Next was the boys who stayed in one bedroom next to the small toilet at the back of the house. Next to that was another big bedroom which the fire escape came down from. Next to that was QNZ [REDACTED] bathroom then her bedroom which had a Yale lock on it and was always locked.
48. Downstairs was QNZ [REDACTED] living room, again with a Yale lock on it, with a playroom at the back of it. Down a few stairs was a bathroom with a couple of baths, a toilet and a row of sinks and a radiator. At the back of that was a shed with a toilet therein and where we hung our coats and where there was another sink where we would peel the potatoes.
49. There were about fifteen children in Cottage 17 where I stayed throughout my time in Quarriers. The girls shared two bedrooms and I slept in both of them at various times. I don't recall anybody ever doubling up in a bed. Quarriers didn't split siblings and I recall being there when my other sisters arrived.

50. As I say, QNZ [REDACTED] was the house mother and as such was the main carer of those in the Cottage though I use the term loosely for those who were under her care. Other Cottages had married couples in charge of them.
51. QNZ [REDACTED] was single and maybe about thirty years old. She was really tall and slim and always wore skirts. She had short brown hair and long fingernails. When she was in the Cottage she always wore a comb in her hair.
52. I'm assuming I met QNZ [REDACTED] on the day I arrived. She was a horrible woman though I cannot say exactly how long after I arrived that I came to that conclusion.

Routine at Quarriers

53. Quarriers was very regimented, probably because there were so many children. I don't recall exactly when we got up in the morning though sometimes if QNZ [REDACTED] had been out she would wake us up when she got home and make us do things like polish the shed floor with a toothbrush or polish our shoes. On those occasions we would be woken up with her screaming at us. It was as if she was in a rage.

Washing/bathing

54. Downstairs, next to the playroom you would turn to your left and there was communal bathing facilities with cubicles. I don't recall a shower and I think it was just baths. There were also multiple sinks. I don't recall if we got a bath every week and I would imagine that it was clean water each time.
55. One recollection I have was when I did have a bath I was always fearful that QDN [REDACTED] or QAK [REDACTED], two brothers who stayed in the same Cottage, would wander in. They never actually came in when I was in the bath but they would skulk around, especially QAK [REDACTED], and you could never feel safe or sure that they wouldn't come in to the cubicle. I don't remember if the cubicle doors were locked or not.

56. I would say that we could probably have a bath whenever we wanted but because of those two brothers you could never really relax and enjoy it.

Food

57. You weren't allowed to leave food. You were left at the table until you finished it. I was never force fed but I know QNZ force fed two sisters and others where she would shove forks full of food into their mouths. This happened fairly regularly. Although I hated fish, which we always got on a Friday, I learned I had to eat it.
58. The way I learned was that there were times when I would have to sit in the TV room with the fish in front of me and I would take hours to eat it. Sometimes I wouldn't even be allowed to go to school if I hadn't eaten it. It was because of this that I eventually learned to just eat it. The food was plentiful but you never got any choice and you ate what you were given.

Clothing/uniform

59. I don't know who supplied the clothes though I think they were donated. I do have a vague memory of getting a school uniform from the drapery that was within the grounds. Also, the laundry would be brought into the Cottage in a big sheet every week and if I saw something I liked I would try and hide it. I think we all did that.
60. It wasn't the case that we all had our own clothes and I could be wearing something one week but when it came back from the laundry it could be given to another girl. To this day I can still have a pile of clothes lying in a room waiting to be ironed and put away because that's basically how our clothes were in the Cottage.

Health

61. We all had to go to the hospital on the grounds when we had head-lice. There was another occasion when I was in the hospital. While I don't recall why I was there it

felt as if I was in sanctuary. I recall wanting to stay there and not wanting to go back to the Cottage.

School

62. The teachers were pretty strict as I recall. I do recall that Mrs Minto, the Director's wife was strict but fair. It's possible the teachers were that way because they had so many children to look after. I do recall that school never felt like a place of safety for us.
63. A strange thing about the school was that if one of us got the belt then we all got it, which certainly happened on at least one occasion when one child didn't do their homework. I don't actually recall what was considered as wrong doing but I do remember us crying regularly after getting two or three of the belt. It wasn't Mrs Minto who gave us the belt but I don't recall who it was.
64. I don't really remember much about the school and don't recall if it prepared me properly for after I left and went to an outside secondary school. The only incident of note I recall was when a boy battered my ears and twisted my arm up my back. I was crying and reported it to a Mrs EPY but she was just angry that I had interrupted her then grabbed my arm and twisted it in the same way the boy had done.

Recreation

65. Although our time in the Cottage was awful there was many a time when we could play outside and those were genuinely happy times. The children all played well together and there was a great comradery.
66. We didn't have much and would only have one bike between all of us which was alright if you got the first shot. But the thing was that we did get to be children and got to have fun when we were outside. If somebody from outside was to see us in those circumstances they would have thought we were having an idyllic childhood.

Trips

67. Holidays were actually really good and I remember they would hire a bus and we would hang streamers out the window and sing songs. We went to places like Girvan and Ayr. We went to big houses there and would go as a Cottage. We would go to the seaside and that was lovely.
68. I think it was possibly because we were in a different atmosphere but I have no recollection of being fearful or wary when we were on these holidays. I think we went on these trips once a year and I only seem to have happy memories of those trips.
69. We also went to a Christmas party on a frigate and I also have this memory of being on a submarine. We also went to shows and I recall going to see the Wombles, going to a Cliff Richard concert and Glen Michael's Cavalcade once came to Quarriers. I think, to that extent, we were actually quite privileged.

Visits/visitors/review of detention

70. My mum visited us but not often. There was also a number of adults who were called "The Group" and I assume they were volunteers. All I recall is that they would come and visit a Cottage and I think may have taken some of us out for the day.

Christmas/birthdays

71. Christmas was a big deal at Quarriers and I think presents were donated. My mum also brought us presents and I think she had to work her socks off in order to get them. When we got up on Christmas morning there would be stockings hanging up for us with maybe an orange and a small gift.
72. Quarriers also had Christmas trees up and a big chimney for Santa to come down. I think Christmas was done properly by Quarriers and was an example of how life could be good there. What let the place down was some of the house parents it employed.

73. I genuinely have no recollection of our birthdays being celebrated.

Bedwetting

74. Bedwetting was a problem for my sisters and I remember my sister [REDACTED] getting wrapped in wet sheets by QNZ [REDACTED] because she had wet the bed. This happened several times. QNZ [REDACTED] would go crazy if one of us wet the bed and it was another example of us living with fear and dread while there. We would be lying in bed praying that nobody had wet the bed because we were so fearful of her reaction.
75. QNZ [REDACTED] would scream and shout and drag whoever had wet their bed by the hair out of their bed. She would be screaming "You're filthy. You wet the bed. You're a dirty girl". Telling us we were dirty girls was a favourite comment by her. She would also smack a child on the legs which, given their legs would be wet, was dreadfully painful.
76. There was many a time QNZ [REDACTED] would smack [REDACTED] on the legs and when she did I would fly at her. Her usual response was simply to laugh at me or to grab me by the hair. I always knew this was going to happen but her treatment of [REDACTED] just infuriated me.
77. If QNZ [REDACTED] knew a child was a bed wetter she would check their bed in the morning but the smell was usually enough to give it away. Sometimes I would wash [REDACTED]'s sheets for her before I went to school in an attempt to appease QNZ [REDACTED] but, given the fact that the sheets were washed in the laundry, I could never see her problem.
78. I suppose there was some sort of attempt to help children avoid wetting the bed as I recall QKT [REDACTED] had a rubber sheet and a bell attached to it but none of this stopped QNZ [REDACTED] going crazy when a child wet their bed. I just felt that she took a sadistic pleasure in catching a child having wet their bed which allowed her to

show her authority. Our stomachs would be in knots waiting for her to come in to the room in the morning.

Running away

79. Myself and [REDACTED] once planned to runaway but all we did was sit up a tree across the river until it got dark. Nobody bothered coming to find us. We had actually run out from the dinner table grabbing half a banana on the way but nobody stopped us. I don't recall if QNZ [REDACTED] was there that day or not. I ran away several times but, as I say, we had nowhere to run to as we didn't know where our mum was.

Abuse at Quarriers

80. According to Quarriers I was a bad-tempered devil but the truth of it was that I was outspoken in defence of my family and others who I saw being abused. I would scream at these times which was dealt with by QNZ [REDACTED] grabbing my hair and locking me in the cupboard. I knew I would end up in the cupboard but felt it was worth it at the time. However, while in the cupboard I would then hear others screaming and would I would feel devastated that I couldn't help them.
81. On other occasions I was forced to sit under a table in the kitchen all night because she hadn't liked something I had said to her. The others would be in bed and I would fall asleep there but strangely I have no recollection of ever trying to get out from under the table.
82. Getting locked in the cupboard was a regular thing that happened to me any time I tried to protect my siblings and others. There was a cleaner called Mrs Glassford who would always try and comfort me when I was locked in the cupboard. Mrs Glassford and the other helpers would often be present when QNZ [REDACTED] grabbed me.
83. There was one incident when, as usual, QNZ [REDACTED] was ridiculing my brother, [REDACTED]. She used to love doing that and she would put us in a circle with a child in

the centre and the rest of us would have to call them names. We were all too afraid not to do it.

84. On the occasion with my brother, he was a really nervous boy and he had been in the kitchen peeling potatoes and I think he saw a spider or something like that and started screaming. QNZ [REDACTED] got us all into the shed where she put [REDACTED] in the middle and poured the bucket of potatoes on his head. He was older than me but a still just a wee boy.
85. I flew at QNZ [REDACTED] screaming at her to leave him alone. To this day I still remember her reaction. She just laughed at me. That was what she used to do, just goad us all the time and she seem to get some strange pleasure out of it.
86. The safest place to be in the Cottage was to try and be invisible because you lived in fear, especially on a Sunday. We didn't have our personal places to keep things and on a Sunday it would be a mad dash to get to the cupboard to get a pair of socks that matched. There was never enough for all of us. If you didn't manage to get a pair then QNZ [REDACTED] would shout at us and batter us with a hairbrush.
87. QNZ [REDACTED] used to grab you by the hair on the side of your hair and twist it. The smacks were bad enough but the hair-grabbing was awful. She would approach you spreading her fingers while making a snake like noise and would grab and twist my hair. She often left scratch marks on my neck. I ended up pulling my own hair out from the frustration of what was happening. I had bald patches because of it.
88. There was an incident I recall when I was sick and for some reason was lying on QNZ [REDACTED] bed. A man, whom I assume was a doctor, came in and told me to lie on my front. He then took my pants off and my legs were slightly apart. He and QNZ [REDACTED] then stood there in silence and nothing else happened. I look back on that as an adult and for the life of me can't work out what it was all about other than I recall I had sore legs prior to that incident. I don't know what had caused that pain. All I recall was a feeling of shame.

89. Some of the other boys in the cottage always had us feeling on edge. They were bullies and formed their own wee gang. They were QDN and QAK two brothers, QDL who was QKT's brother, QDO and There was a constant fear of being trapped or caught by them on your own.
90. QDN was maybe a couple of years older than me, QAK maybe a three or four years older than me and QDO was definitely a lot older than me, maybe eight years older. was maybe seven years older than me and QDL I would have said was roughly the same age as me.
91. They would take any opportunity they got to get you on your own. There was an incident with QAK when he got me into the boy's bedroom and I can remember the sun shining through the window. I have no recollection of how I got upstairs into that room, I just recall being there.
92. QAK was on the bed trying to touch me and I was sitting on the bed and held the heavy cover tight around me so as he couldn't touch me. I don't know how old I was at this time but I think I must have been a wee bit older as I had the strength to hold him off which I doubt I could have if I was only six or seven.
93. QAK hunting ground was very much in the Cottage where he would try and get you on your own. This was one of the reasons we all wanted to play outdoors as we felt safer there and it was more difficult for him, or his friends, to get to us. Of course, when we were outside we were also safe from QNZ
94. There was another occasion when QDN and QAK and QDL grabbed hold off me up in the park. The only thing I now recall is that one of them, I don't know which one, was naked and I was looking up at the sky. I don't remember getting there, I don't remember what actually happened and I don't remember the aftermath. It's as if I've just blanked it out other than that I recall being there.

95. What I don't understand is why, when I returned to the Cottage, nobody noticed that anything was wrong with me. I know I would have been upset after the incident but maybe it was indicative of how life in the Cottage forced us to hide our feelings and not tell anybody about what happened to us.
96. QDO [REDACTED] was a sexual predator. I think I was about six when he first started on me and he would have been about thirteen. I recall there were various times that he got me in the toilet at the back of the shed. I don't recall if I went there voluntarily and I don't recall what actually happened but I used to play with dolls and he would often say to me that I could have my own baby. Again, it's as if I've just blanked out what happened which is possibly a good thing.
97. Given that I don't recall what happened I can't go as far as to say QDO [REDACTED] sexually assaulted me but there is no doubt in my mind that what happened with him in the toilet and the shed had sexual connotations and I dread to think what actually did happen. I remember he used to say that if I told anybody I would go to jail which certainly suggests that whatever he did was not good.
98. Sometimes I think that maybe the boys I mentioned were themselves abused. I mean otherwise how else would they have known to do such things.
99. There is no doubt that, in my opinion, QDN [REDACTED] and QDM [REDACTED] were favourites of QNZ [REDACTED] and she definitely knew the way that those two and their friends treated us.
100. It was only years later that myself and my sisters felt secure enough to talk about those boys and we each recalled how you would never want to be caught alone with them, as a group or individually, and we recalled times when they would try and grab us and drag us into a cupboard. At the time you were too scared to talk about them.
101. There was always a feeling of fear, frustration and never feeling safe being in the Cottage and the horrible feeling that I was powerless to help the others and protect them from QNZ [REDACTED] and the boys who bullied us. She was just a vile person

who should never have been in such a position and they were just nasty. I can't say that she physically abused us every day but it was certainly a constant part of being in the Cottage.

102. I used to ask my mum why we couldn't come home and she would say that she was saving up pennies to get us all together again. I used to shout this at QNZ [REDACTED] and she would say that my mum would never save her pennies and that we would die in Quarriers. That was a devastating thing for a child to hear but was typical of the emotional torture QNZ [REDACTED] would use on us.
103. It might sound like a small thing but even if one of us fell and got hurt and went into the Cottage cut and crying there was no sympathy from QNZ [REDACTED] she was completely devoid of feelings towards us. I do not recollect her showing any sign of love or affection for any of the children in her care.
104. There was a man who worked as a Cottage father at Quarriers who we called FHD [REDACTED] FHD [REDACTED] He was old and smoked a pipe. He was a pervert and would tickle us in the most inappropriate places under our skirts on an almost weekly basis.
105. He was also a photographer and I remember him once photographing me and getting me to sit on a wheelbarrow and taking loads of photos. He kept telling me to spread my legs further and further and it felt so inappropriate. I know that one of the photos he took that day was displayed in Quarriers but it wasn't one of those taken that was clearly inappropriate.
106. There was also a PE teacher whose name I don't recollect who used to drop keys down the front of the girls' gym shorts. He did this to me and I know he did it to at least one of my sisters. I just recall that he was tall and not particularly old, maybe early thirties.
107. QDM [REDACTED] was the sister of QDN [REDACTED] and QAK [REDACTED] I think she was about five years older than me or thereabouts. She used to get me into QNZ [REDACTED] QNZ [REDACTED] room though how she managed to get the key to that room I do not know.

While in there she used to get me to give her oral sex and would give me a polo mint afterwards. I can't say exactly how often this happened but it was a regular occurrence over a number of years. It was only years later that I discovered she did this with my sister QDK as well.

Reporting of abuse at Quarriers, Bridge of Weir

108. Just before I left Quarriers I divulged to Mrs Minto, the director's wife, the abuse that had been happening in Quarriers. That was something you didn't do as you knew that if you reported any of the abuse to somebody there would be repercussions. Because the place was run by the church you were always being told not to lie. This meant that, rather than lie about what was happening, we simply said nothing.
109. There was a phone in the Cottage and Mrs Minto used to phone and ask for me to go over and help her with this and that, like picking fruit. When I was there I always felt that she was fishing for information from me though I don't now recall the specifics of what was said other than I believe I intimated to her that all was not well in the Cottage and I may have told her that QNZ was hitting some of us and shouting at us.
110. I think as a result of talking to Mrs Minto, the staff at Quarriers wanted to move me to a different Cottage but, at a meeting with a Mr Mortimer who was one of those in charge, I told him I didn't want to move. My thinking was that if I moved I wouldn't be able to protect my siblings. If Mrs Minto took any steps in relation to what I may have told her then I wasn't aware of it.
111. There was a night I recall, it would have been a Sunday, when me and my brothers and sisters were in QNZ living room because our mum had called and we were to speak to her. Such phone calls happened from time to time but not often.
112. I started talking to my mum but after a while somehow found the courage and started screaming down the phone telling her QNZ was killing us and that my mum

should come and get us. QNZ [REDACTED] dragged me away from the phone. Unfortunately my mum didn't do anything about that.

Leaving Quarriers

113. I think what happened when we left Quarriers that my mother took us away one at a time. I seem to recall that we had gone home earlier but were returned either because my mum had poor mental health or couldn't afford to look after us. When we did leave I think we left in order of oldest first over a period of a year or two.
114. While I don't remember the circumstances of how it came to be that we were to leave I do have a clear memory of the day I left. I remember I was given new clothes for that last day and had a grey flannel skirt and a red polo neck.
115. It was hard to leave my sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I felt bad at being happy about leaving. [REDACTED] was so unhappy and was scared that I was leaving as I wouldn't be there to protect her. I remember telling her it wouldn't be long till she was home too and that she wasn't to allow QNZ [REDACTED] to bully her or treat her bad and to remember that one day she would be out of there.
116. I went to the gate where I knew my mum would come through. At first it was dry and I was all excited about going home. However, I sat there for what seemed like hours and when it started to rain I got soaked but continued to sit there.
117. QNZ [REDACTED] used to tell me regularly that I would never leave Quarriers and would die there and the longer I sat at the main gate the more, for the first time ever, I started to believe what she had said and thought my mum wouldn't come and I would have to stay at Quarriers.
118. I remember feeling so dejected but just at the point where I was about to go back to the Cottage a car came through the gate and it was my mum. Looking back I feel that the worst part of what should have been such a happy day was that, just before

my mum arrived, I had allowed myself to give up all hope about ever getting out of Quarriers and that I had actually started to believe the things QNZ [REDACTED] had said.

119. I think it was a social worker who was in the car with my mum. I still remember the sheer elation I felt when I realised my mum had come for me. I assume that my mum went to say hello to my two sisters but I have no recollection of that nor do I remember saying goodbye to QNZ [REDACTED] or the journey home which was down to Liverpool.

Life after being in care

120. After I left Quarriers I was out of the care system though we still had involvement with social workers due to the fact our mum had married a drinker. My mum left our step-dad and we went back to Edinburgh where we ended up in a homeless unit. Because of that and the fact that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were still in care, though I hesitate to use that word as it certainly wasn't care, social workers continued to be involved with our mum.
121. My mum, me, QDK [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were all in one room in the homeless unit and, while it was far from perfect, it felt like sanctuary after being in Quarriers. We had no money and there were truckers and prostitutes who stayed in the unit, it was a seamen's mission, and they used to feed us. The truckers would take us to café's and buy us food while the prostitutes would buy us sweets.
122. I don't recall how long we were in the homeless unit for, maybe a couple of months, but it went on fire and we moved to Pilton in Edinburgh. I remember somebody died in that fire. When we moved to a house in Pilton our step-dad moved in with us and life with him was awful due to him being an alcoholic. I think [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] joined us within a year.
123. I went to secondary school at St Augustine's. During my time at Quarriers, especially when QNZ [REDACTED] was screaming at us, I would sit and dream of having a good life.

I didn't know what a good life was but I was determined that I would have one. So, when I was thirteen I got a job doing a paper round and when I was fifteen I lied about my age and got a job in Crawford's Kitchen. I was still at school but determined to have money.

124. I met my ex-husband when I was seventeen and after that I worked as much as I could. My first job was in Goldberg's Department Store in Edinburgh and then my first full-time job was in the civil service with the skills training agency. I worked in the personnel division then in staff training.
125. [REDACTED] and I got married then my daughter [REDACTED] was born and I took a year off before going back to work. I then worked for Standard Life and now work for a bank. My daughter [REDACTED] was born about 30 months after [REDACTED]. My husband and I split up when [REDACTED] was six.

Impact

126. When I look back I sometimes wonder how I managed to get the qualifications that I did as my mum was forever leaving our step-dad and we missed a lot of school because of it. We would have to stay with relatives and if it wasn't near St Augustine's then, as often as not, my mum wouldn't have the money to pay our bus fares so we missed school.
127. The impact of my time in the 'care system' has been immense. It has been largely negative and has driven many negative/destructive behaviours throughout all aspects of my adult life. I will attempt to outline them below.
128. This has to be the area that has suffered the most – as an expectant mum, my life fell apart. What should have been a time where I looked forward to bringing a much wanted child into this world, this turned out to be one of the most catastrophic periods of my life (asides from my time in 'care'), and the life that I had built after Quarriers, became a thing of the past.

129. I suddenly started to fret about dying, about not being around to care for this child that I was carrying. To being fearful that something would happen to me, rendering my unborn child without a mother. The fear was indescribable, I couldn't articulate to anyone why I was feeling the way I was because I had never divulged the true horrors of my time in care to anyone. I was trapped with my own thoughts and fears and started to become unwell mentally.
130. It put a massive strain on my marriage as my husband at the time couldn't understand the change in me. I became convinced that I had all sorts of terminal illnesses and that I would die as a result of them. I struggled to cope and needed psychiatric support – I spent my first wedding anniversary in a psychiatrist's office trying to explain myself and trying to get help even though I still couldn't be honest with him as to what my darkest fears were and why. I felt isolated and the shame and fear that I suffered in Quarriers resurfaced.
131. Once my first daughter was born, I became a shadow of who I had been prior to becoming pregnant but I was determined to be the best mum that I could be despite it being a daily struggle. I became anxious that my daughter would come to harm and rather than enjoy being a new mum, I was terrified of something happening to her, her being stolen from me by predators or by me becoming unwell and her being taken off me.
132. I refused to go into any hospital because I was so afraid of someone stating that I was mentally unwell and unfit, so I basically battled every day to appear okay. I lived each day fretting and worrying and became more and more ill, only accepting antidepressants when she was six months old because my mental health reached such a peak that my doctor decided with my permission, to give me tablets.
133. I had my 2nd daughter and felt stronger, using some of the behavioural techniques that I had learnt and put them into practice and by then, I had also been honest with my husband so he had a bit of an understanding of the underlying issues and fears. Regardless, I have spent every day of their lives, worrying about their safety, I still do that.

134. I can become crippled with fear of them being abducted, that is one of my biggest fears. I can lay awake at night even now, and become crippled with the fear of them being in pain and being frightened and I'm not there to reach them or help them – this is a daily struggle for me. I battle with being rational about this on a daily basis.
135. I have had first-hand experience of 'good' people being abusers so I am always looking out for the signs and I trust no one, not one person. I only trust myself with them. It is exhausting being this way. It has impacted on my relationship with them as they don't fully understand why I am so paranoid, they just don't get it and they can't as I haven't divulged my childhood to them apart from them knowing that I didn't have a great time in 'care.
136. I have been in situations where they have crept up on me from behind or when they were a bit younger, they would try to pin me down to tickle me, I cannot describe the feeling of wanting to lash out at them for them doing that. I can't differentiate from them and abusers, so my default position is always to fight back
137. When I say that I am filled with fury when they have innocently done that to me, I mean I have had to hold myself back from becoming physically angry with them – there have been times when they have looked at me when they were little, not knowing exactly what they have done – that breaks my heart to this day.
138. I have always tried to make them street wise , telling them that if they feel that something doesn't feel right, to tell me and that they will always have my support and that I will listen to them. Again, possibly due to me being so strong about this point, they have looked at me in such a way that they have become so confused by the message that I have been trying to convey to them.
139. Additionally, in terms of discipline, I have struggled with that. I pride myself on bringing up two hard working, caring girls but I accept that I could have parented them better if I had the confidence to reprimand without believing that they would feel the same despair and misery that I felt when I was in similar situations in my childhood where I was being reprimanded - those occasions for me where filled with

aggression, fear and isolation so, I erred on the side of caution and shied away from anything that would make them feel afraid – now I know that they weren't living my young life and it would never be the same experience for them – you live and learn.

Work-life

140. This has been another area of absolute exhaustion. My mum always told me that she was saving pennies so that she could buy a house and get us all back home. This is something that I can't forget. I always worked regardless of being ill, I would still go to work so that I never ran the risk of losing a job. Even when I was at my worst, I forced myself to go to work and function so that I would always be able to provide for them – that in itself made me feel even more unwell. I also worried that my girls would be taken off me if I couldn't provide for them. The feeling of mental exhaustion was immense, I struggled if I am honest and that led to more periods of heightened anxiety.

Relationships

141. I trusted no one and probably still don't. When my marriage broke down, I remained single for years, not trusting anyone to be in my house with my girls for fear of them disciplining them unfairly or worse yet, abusing them. The abuse has left a mark on my life and I don't believe that I will ever come to terms with that – period.

My values and beliefs

142. I still suffer anxiety about being bad or being perceived as being bad. This cripples me. It is a trait that I still have to this day. About always having good behaviour even when I disagree with someone's actions. My default is to be quiet, not to rock the boat, be invisible so to speak.
143. I have a terror of being put in jail through no fault of my own, I suppose being incarcerated and finding myself at the mercy of others – it is a massive fear for me. This came about by the incidents with QDO He told me that I would go to

prison/jail if I told anyone about what had gone on with him. It has had a lasting, destructive impact on me so much so that I can catastrophize a situation to the point of making myself ill with nerves.

144. I can still lay awake at night and over analyse a situation, picking at my actions to see if I did do something wrong. Sometimes in the light of day, I can rationalise it and see that I have not done anything wrong but it takes a lot out of me to reach that point and often, I back down when I have been in the right. I was encouraged to feel angry about my time in 'care' – this backfired on me as I became a different person to the one that everyone knew.
145. I won't let people walk over me but I know that I have a long way to go to get to the point of not being fearful of being a bad person by standing up for what I believe in. This is one of the biggest fallouts from being in 'care.'
146. No one ever supported me to tell me that I wasn't bad or that it wasn't my fault, I had no-ones guidance and I was always being told that I was bad – you start to believe it and I guess that these fears and traits have followed me into adulthood. I can't go back and undo them, I can only move forward and hope that I can make some peace with myself in the coming years.
147. One final thing, no child should have to suffer in the way that me and my siblings did. To start your childhood with the levels of abuse that we did was avoidable. As child, to feel the misery that I did was shameful. It was my birth right to enjoy a childhood filled with innocence and happy memories, that was robbed from me by the very people put in place to protect me and for that, I will always feel an element of despair.
148. I have a good life now, and it is what I make and I strive (and succeed!!) to make it good for me and my children so I am not beaten, I will not let the past define me however, I have to acknowledge the impact of my own experience in the hope that history does not repeat itself for other children who find themselves in a 'care environment.

Reporting of Abuse

149. There were court cases against QNZ as well as QDN and QAK QAK My first involvement in these prosecutions was that the police approached me at the beginning of 2004 or 2005 I believe. I did not want to be involved as life was hard for me at the time through struggles I was having at home. I think it was my sisters and who gave the police my name having raised an action against QDN and QAK
150. The police attended at my house and I gave them a statement mainly about the QAK/QDM/QDN but I also told them about the rest of my time at Quarriers and about QNZ, QDO and I also attended at the Fiscal's Office in Greenock and spoke to a female.
151. The police who dealt with me were Scott McCallum and a female officer. They were lovely and so understanding, very pleasant. I did attend the High Court in Glasgow, I think at the beginning of 2006, to give evidence against QAK/QDM/QDN but, after sitting in the witness room for a few days, the case was dropped and we weren't called.
152. I gave a separate statement in respect of QNZ to the same two police officers. When I gave my first statement it was clear that the police were concentrating on sexual offences by QAK/QDM/QDN and QDO but when I said "and then there was QNZ" they said they weren't dealing with her at that point.
153. However, they later came back to my house and I gave a statement about QNZ QNZ I also attended again at the Fiscal's Office in Greenock and eventually gave evidence against QNZ in Greenock Sheriff Court. That experience of giving evidence in court was a nightmare.

154. The advocate for the defence was called Edgar Prais and he continually made me out to be a liar. He questioned me for days. He was a formidable character and I just remember being furious that I was even there. I felt so indignant about being grilled by him about things that I knew had happened but that he refused to believe.
155. My sensible head was telling me that I had to go through those proceedings in order for justice to be carried out but I was furious that he was not only calling me a liar but was trying to come up with reasons to validate QNZ [REDACTED] behaviour towards us.
156. Edgar Prais must have known from early on in the case that QNZ [REDACTED] was guilty. There was no argument in court about the fact that those named in the charges had been in Quarriers but he continually tried to ask the same question in different ways simply to try and trip me up in what I was saying about what she did to us.
157. He must have asked me the same question twenty or thirty times in different ways and if I said one word of a difference in my reply he would hone in on it. However, he got nowhere with me because all I was doing was telling the truth and no matter what he said he couldn't trip me up.
158. When the jury came to their decision they fully believed me and the verdicts of guilty in respect of the charges concerning me were unanimous. As a result of being found guilty QNZ [REDACTED] was given six years' probation which was a sentence given to her because she was elderly and it was considered to be her first offence.
159. I am not sure that there was ever a court case against QDO [REDACTED] though I know I told the police about him.

Counselling

160. When I was pregnant with my daughter [REDACTED] I suffered from depression but didn't understand what I was going through and what the triggers were. I just thought

I was going to die. I was terrified of having a baby and then dying as I was scared that [REDACTED] would then end up in care like I did.

161. I had a Community Psychiatric Nurse and I saw a psychiatrist. I then saw a lovely woman whose name I don't recall. She took me back to Quarriers to try and exorcize the demons I had about that place and it obviously helped as I was thereafter able to have my second daughter [REDACTED] and not need anti-depressants.
162. The Community Psychiatric Nurse came in once a week and after [REDACTED] was about six months old I had to go onto anti-depressants. I hadn't wanted to take them prior to that due to the fact that I was breast feeding [REDACTED]. I think I stayed on these tablets for about a year.
163. [REDACTED] was born when I was 28 and I don't think I had even thought about Quarriers since I had been about seventeen but when I was pregnant with her and she was then born I just had this incredible fear that she would end up in a home if something happened to me. Becoming a mother changed my life and brought about fears I hadn't known existed.
164. The last time I saw a counsellor was last year after being sent there by Future Pathways. However, the woman I saw told me that it was time that I got angry about my time in Quarriers. I did get angry but not only did I not like the person I became, neither did my daughters. It just wasn't who I wanted to be so I stopped seeing that counsellor after seeing her once a week for a couple of months.

Records

165. I have never obtained my records but in the court case against QNZ [REDACTED] they were read out in court so I know they exist, or at least did so at that time. One of the

things they mentioned was that, while in Quarriers I suffered from Bell's Palsy which was brought on by stress. I also suffered from this when my first daughter was born.

166. I would love to get hold of my records because there are gaps in my life that I would like to fill in. It's not about the detail that would be in such records as I doubt if they were truthfully filled in and I do have some trepidation about what they would contain. However, it's the timeline I would be interested in so I can understand where I was at certain points of my young life and why I was where I was.

Lessons to be Learned

167. People should be able to read the warning signs shown by children when something is upsetting them. People shouldn't be scared to act on what they see and shouldn't assume that somebody else will take care of it. They shouldn't be scared to be wrong and should investigate if they see something wrong with a child.
168. People shouldn't have to worry about the impact of being wrong if they try to intercede on a child's behalf. If it is being done in the right way and with the child's best interest at heart then it should be understood as such.
169. Listen to children, be aware of what they are NOT telling you. Look for the hidden signs, silence can be the loudest message. When I think of all the 'touch points' that I was going through in the 'care' system and not one person acted in my best interest it fills me with despair and anger.
- 170.
171. Don't bury your head in the sand, listen to your instincts and keep pushing in the most sensitive way to fully understand that child. It is vital that you see beyond the silence, see beyond the behaviours and question why, always ask why a child is behaving in a certain way and look to support them.
172. There were children at Quarriers who had a great time there but there were so many who didn't and the signs that things were wrong would have been there for all to see.

But nobody acted on these signs which meant that Quarriers was almost a playground for paedophiles. At least that's how I feel.

173. Children should be listened to. They shouldn't be put in isolation where they have nobody they trust to speak to. One of the big problems with Quarriers was that it was almost completely self-contained so there was no outside influence, nobody who could look at the place from a different angle and see the things that were wrong. That in itself led to things being covered up.
174. I had Bell's Palsy and was pulling my hair out. These are obvious physical signs that things were wrong and should have been picked up. We know that there can be such physical things in children who are suffering and people should make it their duty to act on such signs.
175. 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.

QOH

Signed.....

Dated.....

04/11/2019