Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of



Support person present: No

Other persons present: Denis Moloney, Donnelly & Wall Solicitors, Solicitor and Isla Bowen, Clyde & Co, Solicitor for the Sisters of Nazareth

- 1.
 My name is _______ My date of birth is _______
 1947. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
- 2. When I was received I was given the name of Sister LGS It was an old English name. They must have run out of saints names. I had the name for thirty years or thereabouts. I asked headquarters in Hammersmith if I could change back to my Christian name and luckily I was granted it. I was known as Sister LGS during my time in Scotland.
- 3. I joined the Sisters of Nazareth in 1963. I have had a number of postings within the order. I did my postulate in Finchley and my novitiate in Hammersmith. When I was first professed I was sent to Devon, a place outside Plymouth. It was a little place called **1** wasn't qualified but I worked under an experienced Sister and Mother Superior. I got good grounding. I was there for one year. I was then sent to Nazareth House in Lasswade, Edinburgh for one year from 1966 to 1967. We called it Lasswade but it was also known as Bonnyrigg. I was recalled to Hammersmith, where I went to college in London for two years doing training in nursery care. I was then sent to Plymouth for around eighteen months. The **1** place had closed and they had sent the few remaining babies and toddlers to Plymouth. I went from Plymouth to St Joseph's in Belfast. I was there very briefly because there was some

complication with another sister who should have come but didn't. I don't know the details. I remember that was during the height of the troubles in Ireland in the 1970s. I then moved onto **sectors** in County Armagh. It was a place which looked after babies for adoption. Then I went onto a nursery in Finchley. I received training in child care. It then closed between six to twelve months after I was there. It was no longer required as a training centre. Then I went to Cardiff for six months. From there I went onto Glasgow for five and a half happy years. I went to **sectors** in Essex for three years. It was very small, there were only two children's units. It was also closed down because institutional care was becoming obsolete.

4. I then ran a pre-school playgroup in the school in Sussex. It was a totally different role from what I was used to. We had a primary school there called the school there called the play group was for children aged three to four years old. There wasn't the same challenge for me but anyway it was a learning curve. I was there until 1986 then I came to Ireland. I went to Mallow in County Cork. I was there for 27 years. It wasn't a children's home. It was a residential care home for the elderly and I was the retired as such. It's a small convent. I happen to be the school We are all of an age now. Subsequently in more recent years I did a few other things like sociology. We did a lot of seminars and day training. We kept abreast of current issues regarding children in care. This had all to do with child care in Glasgow.

Nazareth House, Lasswade

5. I was at Nazareth House, Lasswade from 1966 to 1967. I have huge difficulty in focussing on that. I was in a building which was separate from the main house. There were two groups of children. We kept the families together whether they were two or ten. They didn't separate them into age groups in my time. I don't have any recall of incidents. There were quite a number of younger children but most of the children were of school age.

6. I am asked about how it came to be that I went to Nazareth House. In those days I would have been sent there. I think that there would be more dialogue today. I wouldn't have chosen to go there. I would have been under a sister who was experienced. It was akin to a work placement to see what you would be suited to. I had a passion for working with children. There was no formal interview process. There didn't seem to be a vetting or checking process.

Other Sisters

7. There was a sister superior and a senior sister who had years of experience. There were also two junior sisters like me. I think there were five sisters and some lay staff. I know that two of the sisters are now deceased. Another one left the order. She was called Sister IFX The Mother Superior was called Sister Adrian. She was a Scottish lady. She has been dead for many years. There was a Sister Mary of Nazareth. She also died. She was a lovely, lovely person. I think there was a Sister IFJ I can't be sure, that is my best recall. She is deceased. The other one was Sister Anthony. Sister Anthony and I were in the same unit. I had access to other sisters who were much more experienced.

My role and the running of my group

8. The main house comprised of three units of children. It was a big institution. I was in a newer building near the road. Myself and Sister Anthony had a group each in the new building. She would have been the senior sister and I was the junior. She would have been there to observe me. I could refer to her for guidance. There were five groups. I think that there were approximately eighty children in Nazareth House. The units didn't have names. The building I was in was called Holycott. It was a nice building. I think it has since been sold. I have no recollection of the other buildings having names. It would have been referred to as "the unit that sister so and so ran". I lived in my room in the unit. There were bedrooms with multiple children in each one.

I think it depended on the number of boys and girls. I know that there were two floors. The unit was a mixed one. It was a family unit.

- 9. The sleeping accommodation was separated for boys and girls. The siblings would go to school together if they were school age. Some of them might have had preschool brothers or sisters. They had contact all the time.
- 10. In terms of my role at Nazareth House, it would have been explained to me by the superior of the house. The term 'house mother' would describe my role in the house. I was allocated to Holycott. I would have met the superior and she would have given me the role I was playing. It wouldn't have been a written job description. I was shown around the units and everything would have been explained to me verbally. I wouldn't have had an induction or anything like that.
- 11. I was left in charge of the unit. There were female lay staff. The lay staff assisted during the day. I can't remember any of their names. I think they also sometimes lived in the unit. We were on site all of the time. I think that there must been more than two. I think they alternated regarding the supervision of the children. I was responsible for the supervision of the children and making sure that they had everything that they needed. I made sure they had plenty to eat, which they did, and good clothing. I made sure that the children weren't looked down upon by others. I didn't want them to look like they were from an institution. They were all well-dressed. There were no formal deputies. We would always have a senior sister, a sister mainly, and who we could look to for specific advice or guidance. There wasn't anyone who was specifically assigned to that role. You could go to a more experienced person rather than somebody of your own age group. It didn't change in the year that I was there.

The Children

12. There were boys and girls in Lasswade when I was there. I was dealing with anything from children of toddler age to the ages of twelve or thirteen. That was the

general gist of the age range. I wouldn't have had a very wide age range in my group. In my unit, there could have been anything up to fifteen or twenty children. I haven't got a very clear recall of that. I can't be more specific. It would vary on how many families we had.

- 13. I am asked how long children typically remained at Nazareth House. I think there was a mixture who were there for a short period and others who were there longer term. For me, looking back it was a very short period of time to make a clear assessment regarding that.
- 14. They did the ordinary things and we tried to emulate a normal family life. I was very junior so I would not have been responsible for a lot of administrative stuff. The children weren't brought in by their families. I think the children would have been brought there by the local authority.
- 15. The children had school uniform and ordinary clothes. In terms of what they wore when they were not at school, they had their own clothes like any child would have. The clothing would have been bought for them. I have no recollection of taking them shopping. The care staff were responsible for the washing and ironing of the clothes. The school uniforms were done at the weekends. It would have been done on a daily basis. I have no recollection of the children doing any washing or ironing. I can't remember the children having to polish their own shoes. The clothes were not shared between the children. They had their own clothes.
- 16. The children had rooms. There were three or four children in each room. They had wardrobes and little lockers. They had their own bits and pieces.
- 17. I am asked about the procedure for new children coming into the unit. I can't remember any new children being admitted into my unit so I can't say much about that. There is nothing that stands out.

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Daily Routine

Breakfast/Dinner

- 18. The children had their breakfast and dinner in the home. I can't remember if the children walked to school or if they were taken by mini-bus. If the school had been a distance they would have been driven there. I wouldn't say that they came home for lunch. They had milk, tea and biscuits after school before supper. We got the children up in time for school which, I think, was at nine o'clock. The children would have been up, washed dressed and had their breakfast. I think that would have been between eight and eight thirty. They would have had cereal and probably a cooked breakfast. They would have had porridge or bacon and sausage. It would have been something like that.
- 19. The evening meal would have been something like spaghetti and beans. The kitchen in the main building provided the meals. We also had a little kitchen in the unit for washing up. There was maybe a cooker in it for heating things up. The food was lovely. If a child didn't eat their food it would usually be a stroppy three year old or something like that. I can't recall an incident where a child didn't eat their meal. I remember an incident where a child didn't want to eat his dinner so I said that he could be given desert instead because he liked that. We worked around it in some way.

Bedtime/bedwetting

- 20. In terms of bed time, it would have been age appropriate. I think for the younger ones that it might have been six thirty or seven o'clock. The older ones would have been up a bit later. The teenagers would have been up much later. It was difficult to get them to go to bed.
- 21. I am asked about bedwetting. I remember some of the children had huge problems with incontinence. In terms of how bedwetting was dealt with, we would make sure they were washed. Those children would have been showered down to make sure

that they were fresh for school. We would take the sheets off the bed. We would have been done when they had gone to school. We would make the bed up again. We helped some of them by making sure that they went to the toilet as late as possible so that they would not be disturbed at night. I think there would also have been some protection on the mattress for the children who wet the bed. If children needed to use the bathroom in the middle of the night, they would have been free to do that. Some of the children would have woken themselves up. They would have been able to get up and take themselves off to the bathroom. There weren't any locked doors.

22. I would be on duty at night with a member of care staff. I was in my own room. I would make sure they were safe in bed and I would listen for any child crying. I recall that some of the children would have nightmares. I would be very much on alert. I'm a nocturnal creature anyway so I would go round late at night to double check on them. I would look in and make sure that everybody was okay.

Bathing

23. The children had a bath in the evening. I don't think they bathed every night. I can't remember how often that happened. There were baths in between the rooms. The younger ones would have been bathed by us or assisted during bath time. The older ones would be monitored but at a discreet distance. They were able to look after themselves. There were a couple of bathrooms. The younger children were bathed individually. We would test the water for the older ones. The older ones were left to look after themselves. It depended on the age of the children but they were supervised.

Leisure

24. For leisure time, the children played outside. The boys and girls played together. They were allowed to be mixed. It depended on the weather but the boys played football. The younger ones would be supervised playing outdoors. They would also

play games outdoors. They had television. There were books and comics for them. They also had plenty of toys and games. Some of the children had their own toys. If, for example, people had donated them to the home. I think others had presents from parents or relatives which would have been very special to them. They would have their own stuff and it would be kept in the bottom of their little locker. They would know their own stuff.

25. I can't remember any formal activities. I'm unsure if they went to groups like scouts or brownies. I'm not very clear about that. I think that there would have been. There was a very large field at the back of the main building. The boys would play football there. The staff would sometimes play a game with them. The younger ones would be supervised. I have no clear memory of children being taken to the cinema.

Trips

26. There were trips during the year. In the summer, we took the children to Dunbar. It was a holiday for them. The house we stayed in was near the beach. I remember it being a very large, old building. I think that the trips would be staggered as there were so many children. It couldn't have been all of the units at the same time. It wouldn't have been possible to accommodate them. We took different groups. I remember there being a lot of younger children on the trips. I was accompanied by two other sisters during the trips. They had some kids from their units. The children were given fish to eat on a daily basis. I remember somebody brought fish and put it in the sink. I can't remember who would have done that. They had a great time. They were able to run free.

Schooling

27. The schooling was done outside of the home. I can't remember any of the names of the schools. I think a lot of the children went to the primary school. I can't remember the proximity of the school. It wasn't just down the road but I have no real recall. I can't remember looking after children of secondary school age. There was liaison between the school and the home. It would usually be if a child had got into trouble.

We would have been told and we would have to go to the school to see somebody about it. I have no recollection of attending parents' evenings. In terms of homework, there were plenty of quiet spaces for the children. There was plenty of scope for that. They were given help with spelling from us. I can't remember the children being given a huge amount of homework. It was however much was required in those days. I have no memory of the children being taught cooking or baking skills.

Health and medical care

- 28. I am asked about health and medical care within the home. There wasn't any specific sister who was responsible for health care of the children. It was provided by the local GP or the Accident and Emergency Department. I didn't ever have the need to take anyone to the hospital. I think they had health checks done at school. I think a health nurse would sometimes come to the school. I might be getting that confused with Nazareth House in Glasgow. I have no recollection of the children being provided dental care in the home. I can't really remember much about that.
- 29. I am asked about the procedure for reporting the deaths of children. I don't recall any children dying when I was there. As such, I wasn't aware of any procedure for reporting the deaths to the authorities.

Religion

30. In terms of religion, we didn't formally teach religion. It wasn't within our remit. It was part of the school curriculum. We would have taken the children to mass. I think it was held in the church in the main building. I don't remember any children being of a different religious persuasion. There were a lot of young children there. I have no clear recall about children making confession.

Manual work

31. I am asked if children did manual work in Nazareth House, like polishing floors or laundry work. I don't remember any structure or formal work. The children liked to

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help the staff with little jobs. They might help out by emptying a bin or setting a table occasionally. There wasn't anything too formal about it. They didn't polish floors in my unit, definitely not. The children were given pocket money. I think it would have been age appropriate. I'm not sure how much they were entitled to. I didn't have anything directly to do with the administrative side of things. It would have been done from the top.

Christmas

32. The children were definitely given Christmas presents. They also had parties at Christmas. The people in Scotland were more than generous to children in care.

Birthdays

33. On their birthdays, the children were given lovely cakes. It would usually be a sponge cake. I remember there was a very creative sister in the kitchen. I can't remember her name. They had ate it at tea time and had a bit of a party. I have no recollection of them getting a present from a family member. They might not have been in a position to buy them anything. I'm not sure but they were definitely given something.

Visitors

- 34. They would have visitors and would be free to see them in a room on their own. It would stand out in my mind if there had been a case where they had to have a supervised visit. I wouldn't have a clear idea if family members were encouraged to visit the children at Lasswade.
- 35. In terms of other visitors, I can't recall anyone else visiting the children. They did have visits from social workers. I think they spoke to the older children on their own. I personally wouldn't have had many direct dealings with social workers. It would been dealt with by a more experienced person in the home.

36. In terms of keeping a record of things, I don't recall there being a visitor book. I think we may have kept hand written records of any issues in my unit. It would have been very basic. I can't remember there being a 'day book'

Inspections

37. In my year there, there could have been a formal inspection from headquarters from London. I'm not clear about that. I haven't got a clear memory of any other inspections in that particular year. I have been asked about the review of childrens' placements in the home. I didn't deal with that. The review would have been done by a senior member of staff. There would have been a conference around it. This would be the case particularly if a child was being returned home. I have no recollection of being present at any conference. I have no recollection of being involved in any case conferences there.

Siblings/Family

- 38. The units in Nazareth House were for families. We tried to keep families together in the units. It wasn't always possible but we did try. If children were housed separately, there wasn't any issue with siblings being kept in contact.
- 39. I don't have any recall of children getting letters from their families. They might have got a card for their birthday from a family member. I'm not sure about that.

Access to children

40. I have been asked if anyone had access to children on their own apart from their own siblings and staff. I don't have a personal recollection of that. If we did, they would not have been allowed in to visit freely to have unsupervised access to the children. I have no recall of priests being there in that particular year. I can't recall any one else like scout leaders or anyone else from the community coming into Nazareth House to visit the children. I'm not sure about that.

Children leaving Nazareth House, Lasswade

41. I don't recall any children leaving or returning home in that year. I'm sorry that I can't help with that.

Discipline and Punishment

- 42. A lot of the children that I looked after were young. I didn't have any mid-teens who would have been stroppy. The children might have penalised by being sent to their bedroom or not allowed to watch their favourite TV programme. There would maybe be a verbal telling off as any parent or guardian would do.
- 43. I don't remember anybody getting beaten or hit in any way as punishment. I have no recollection of anybody being punished physically. I never witnessed anything like that. There were no incidences of very disruptive children or families in Lasswade. There were definitely no such incidents in the year that I was there. I have been asked discipline in the other areas within the home. The main building was further up the avenue. I had no reason to be up there. I wouldn't know about that. I am not aware of a discipline book being kept.
- 44. I definitely didn't see or learn of any abusive behaviour in Lasswade. I didn't ever hear of any concerns from any children about the treatment they were receiving. I don't remember anything like that being discussed by the sisters. If children had an issue they would usually speak to one of us or a member of the care staff. It would be a person that they could identify with in the home. It would usually just be children squabbling. I don't remember anything beyond that. It would definitely stand out in my mind if there had been.

Allegations

45. I have been informed that allegations have been made by some children who were at Nazareth House, against sisters and staff.

Children who may have been at Nazareth House while I was there

LCJ

- LCJ I have been asked if I remember a boy called I definitely don't know 46. the name. I am told the Inquiry has information that suggests he was at Nazareth House from 1960 to 1966. The name doesn't ring a bell at all. He might have been up in the main unit. I didn't know any child of that name. I have been told that there is information from him which says he can remember when he arrived that all of his possessions and clothes were taken from him, and he was issued clothes from a communal source. I have never heard of the person. I would recall the name. I am told that he makes reference to part of the routine being that there was no talking when the lights went out at night for bed, that the nuns would patrol the dormitory and he could hear them walking past as their beads would rattle. I am told he has said that if he didn't hear them coming and he was caught talking he would be taken out of bed and given a beating. I definitely wasn't in that place. He speaks also in relation to some of the food at Lasswade that he would get bread and cheese for supper. He has said he didn't like the cheese so he would give it away, he was caught doing that and received a smack for that. That does not accord with my experience. It absolutely does not. I am told that he has also said that if he didn't like the food they served he would be force fed by the nuns, they would hold his nose and the food was forced into his mouth. He has said that he was about five or six years old the first time that this happened to him and that it happened a couple of times. I definitely don't know about anything about any of that.
- 47. I am told that he has said in relation to visits from family that, if he was ever given anything when he was out it would be taken away from him when he came back to the home. That doesn't accord with my experience. Why would anybody want to take something from them that they got from their own family which would be a treasure to them?
- 48. He has referred to being physically abused on a daily basis by the nuns. He has said that they wouldn't let the children do anything and that they were not allowed any

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close associations with any of the other orphans. They had to be quiet at all times inside the building and were not allowed to talk to each other. That definitely doesn't accord with my experience.

- 49. I am told there is information from LCJ to say that the nuns would walk round with belts and if he was disobedient, the nuns would hit him. He has said they would hit him with their hands and if they felt like it, they hit him with the belts. He has said that if he was caught talking or if he didn't eat his food, the nuns would give him a beating. They used their hands and they used the belts to hit the children. I never witnessed or have known anything like it. I am told he has said that the nuns wouldn't hit children with the belt when they were younger. He goes on to say that it seemed that before the age of five they would use their hands, the slaps they gave were adult slaps and they did not hold back. He has also said that when children were hit with their hands, they hit on the face or the bottom and, that some people would get hit anywhere on their body. I can say that definitely didn't happen.
- 50. I am told that he has said that the nuns also made him stand and watch as they gave other kids a beating. He says this was used as a deterrent, that he was hit by the nuns a number of times over the years as he tended to answer back a lot, that it wasn't just one particular nun who would hit him, they would all hit him and that he saw it happen to the other kids. My response to that allegation is where would all the others come from to witness this? I don't know. I never experienced or witnessed anything like that. I never heard of anything like that either. He has also said that he wet the bed a few times. He goes on to say that when he did wet the bed, he would be hit with a belt by a nun. I am told that he has also said sometimes he was told to stand in the corner with the wet sheet over my head, he had to stand there until the nuns thought he had had enough, or until the sheet had dried. He could be standing there for hours. A couple of times he was made to sit in a cold water bath by a nun, this happened in the summer and the winter. He had to sit there for hours. I never witnessed anything like that. He says he thinks he stopped wetting the bed when he was about seven years old, he remembers children were not allowed out of their beds if they needed the toilet. It was a "no win" situation. He would get hit for wetting

the bed, and he would get hit for getting out the bed to go to the toilet. I have never experienced it, witnessed it or heard anybody talking about it.

- 51. I am told that there is also information from him to say that the belt was used when a nun felt like using it, the nun could be a bad mood, there was no hard and fast rules about when it would be used and, if a nun wanted to make a point she would use the belt for punishment. He has said that he would be hit with the belt on his back or on his bottom, they would hit him four to six times on any one occasion and that he would be hit over his clothes. He has also stated that when he was hit at night for wetting the bed it would be over his nightie and that he was never hit with the belt under his clothes. I definitely don't know anything about any of that.
- 52. I am told that there is also information from him that, he remembers being made to kneel in the corridors and told to face the wall. He has said that when a nun walked past, he would get a slap on the head. He goes on to say that *"I think the we were made to kneel when the nuns were away doing their rosary. This would happen at the weekends when we were not in school during the day. There was a long corridor between the main house and the chapel. The nuns would make us all kneel on the floor, and we had to look at the wall. It would last a couple of hours. This happened every week." The description of the building would sound like the main building because it was obviously a bigger building so there would have been a long corridor maybe that's where the young boy was at the time. However, it doesn't ring any bells.*
- 53. I am informed that he has said about chores that "we were also made to clean the floors. It was wiping the floors. If a nun thought you had missed a bit then you would get a slap for that. You would get slapped for anything. If you talked, you would get a slap. If you missed a bit during your chores, you would get a slap. You also got a slap if you accidentally put on someone else's coat or clothes." I never experienced any of that. I am told he goes on to say "At bath times the nuns would wash us, and I think their touching of my private parts was inappropriate. I don't know if this touching was intentionally sexual, but there was no need to wash our privates so thoroughly. We were capable of washing ourselves by that age. This happened

every bath time, twice a week, right up until I left when I was ten years of age. I question now why they kept washing me at that age". I wouldn't wash the older ones.

- 54. Some information has been read to me which I understand has been said by him as follows: "The older boys abused me sexually. They made me do things that I didn't want to do. I was made to suck older boys' penises. I don't know if it was done to them when they were younger. I didn't think it was natural at the time. This happened to me once or twice a week." I didn't hear anything about that.
- 55. He goes on to say that *"It happened to me the first time when I was about seven years of age. The older boys would come into the room and drag me into another room. There would be the boy who wanted his penis sucked and a couple of other boys who would make you do it. It wouldn't be the same boy every time. I told the nuns and the priest about the abuse from the older boys. I was told that I was lying, that the abuse did not happen. When I told the nuns that I was being bullied and made to do things that I didn't want to do, I was smacked and told to go away. I was told to stop telling lies. I gave up trying to tell anyone after the first couple of smacks. The abuse continued until I was about ten years of age." I didn't have any older boys in my unit.*
- 56. I have been asked if I heard anything from the other sisters about this. I did not. I never heard anything. I am told he goes on to say that "I tried to tell a visiting priest during confession about the abuse. I remember telling him about the abuse by the boys and the beating from the nuns. I was told to stop lying. I gave up telling anyone. I never got to know the individual priests. It was a different priest every Sunday for confession. A few times during confession, the priest would touch me and I was made to suck his penis. I was also made to touch the priests' penises. This happened to me a good few times over the years. The first time this happened to me, I was about six years of age. I think the abuse from the priests happened not long after I complained about the abuse from the older boys." Why would they have confession on a Sunday? I don't even remember the priests there so there can't have been a whole lot. I am informed that he says that if a priest found him wandering about they would take him into a room in the home and they would

sexually abuse him, that it was the same type of abuse he received from the older boys, that the older boys would also grab him when they were passing by and take him into rooms within the home. He says that the abuse by the priest would sometimes happen in the confessional box, that there would be other people waiting outside to do confession and they would be standing out in the church area. He says that he doesn't think it was just him that the priests and older boys were abusing and that he heard things at the time but he didn't put two and two together at that age. He has said that he heard other boys saying that the priests had touched them in the confessional box and that he never saw it happen to anyone else. I am told that he has said that the abuse from the priests continued until he was ten years of age when his dad turned up and took him away. I didn't know this individual. It sounds as if it was in the main building. I don't know anything about any of that. I have no recollection of children in my unit going to confession. He has also said that the care assistants touched him at bath time in a sexual manner. He has said that they would make him do things. I don't know anything about that either.

57. I am told that he has described some other punishments such as being isolated from the other kids and that they would get kids to turn against each other. He has said that if he did anything naughty at school the nuns would give him a beating and he was made to stand in the corner for a couple of hours. They would tell the other kids that he had been naughty. That doesn't accord with my recollection. He has said that he was isolated from the other children in the playground, that if the nuns thought he had been naughty they would not let him associate with the other children at playtime to do things that he enjoyed and that it could be three of four children at a time being punished. He says that children were put in separate corners of the playground and told to keep quiet. They had to kneel, stand or sit if there was chair. He has also said that he remembered one time a bike turned up in the playground and everyone was having a ride on it and he wasn't allowed to. I am told that he described another time when it had been snowing and he wasn't allowed to sledge. He says that they punished everyone in this way. I never saw anything like that.

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LCB

- 58. I have been asked if I recall a girl called **LCB**. I do not. I am told that there is information from her to say that every Sunday, the children from Holycot One and Two were taken to Bonnyrigg swimming pool. She has said that they were great times, but Sister **LTX** would always put a dampener on things with one of her moods, that she was very moody and she would change at the flick of a finger. I know who Sister **LTX** is but I wasn't there at that time. I happened to be in the same place as her years later. It was in a home for the elderly.
- 59. She has said that she remembers a few of the younger boys wet the bed and they got cold showers, that she remembers going to bed and all of those who had done it were lined up in the corridor waiting to get a cold shower. She has said that this happened during the night and that Sister **LTX** put the boys in the shower. I never heard of that happening.
- 60. She has also said that those children who were in the home the longest got more of the abuse and that those whose mum and dad visited didn't get it so bad. They were disciplined but not so harshly. I wasn't aware of that, not in the year I was there anyway.

Nazareth House, Glasgow

61. I went to Nazareth House in Glasgow in 1974. It was summer time when I first arrived. I remember it was 1974. It was lovely. There was a buzz about the place. It was a lively house. I was there until 1979. Again, I was sent there. I hadn't chosen to go. There wasn't a vetting or formal interview process. I recall it was a very old building but nonetheless it was a happy place. We didn't have all of the facilities in the right order. It was very challenging but I liked it very much. There are four units and they were family units. There were approximately 18 to 22 children in each group. There were no more than that in a group.

My role and the running of my group

- 62. I was in charge of a group. I was on the very top floor. There were renovations being done being to the main building. My unit moved over across the avenue to St Basil's. We moved over there when the renovations were going on. There was also a residential care home at the other side in Nazareth House for the elderly. I think that there were four sisters in total, one for each unit. There were lay staff and a Sister Superior. The Sister Superior had overall responsibility for the house. She didn't have charge of any of the units.
- 63. I would have been helped by two members of lay staff. They would have been working full time hours. I think one of them lived in the unit. I can't remember any of their names. I think one of them lived somewhere outside of Glasgow and went home on her days off. There was no male members of staff.
- 64. I reported to the Sister Superior. We had access to other sisters and support. They all had social workers which were a great support. I was a house mother. When I arrived I was shown the physical environment, the number who I had to look after and the staff. I lived in a room on the same floor as my unit. I can remember it well. I was on the top floor.

Other Sisters

65. The Superior in charge was Sister McCartan. She was a local person. Then there was Sister Margaret. They are both deceased now. I think Sister Margaret came in 1976. It was midway through my time there but I could be wrong.

The Children

66. It was a family unit which was mixed with boys and girls. There were different sizes of family. However, some of the children were on their own. I dealt with one or two

children who were pre-school age up to about fourteen or fifteen, that sort of age. Some of the children were reunited with their parents on a trial basis. Some of the children would have been from places like the east end of Glasgow, Greenock or Gourock. There would have been families who had been affected by substance abuse. There was a huge amount of substance abuse at the time.

- 67. The children all had their own clothes and wardrobes. The clothes were bought for them from a shop called C&A. It closed down a number of years ago. They had lots of clothing in C&A that hadn't been sold because there was a little button missing or something. The children had beautiful duffle coats. They had plenty of everything. The older children chose which coats they wanted to wear with their allowance that they got from social services. There was a laundry where we had access to had bigger machines. There was also machine in the unit. We could wash clothes on a daily basis. The laundry room was in the main building. We all had access to it. The children had their own clothes and shoes. They definitely didn't share clothes.
- 68. I have been asked about the procedure for when we received a new child or family at Nazareth House. We would have received an enquiry from Social Services about availability for a family depending on the area in Glasgow. If they had difficulty they would be separated but they would have access and meet up with each other on a daily basis. We would get a call and would have been given the reasons why they were being admitted. We would also get a report from Social Services about why they were coming. They would bring the children. I'm not 100% clear if that was a written report but we would get a report of some sort. It would be under a section of the Children's Act. It would probably have gone to Sister Superior and then we would have could a copy of it. It all depended on the circumstances and age group of the children.
- 69. I can remember one particular family arrived at Nazareth House. They consisted of some older ones who were coming up to their teenage years and younger ones. They were in a much neglected state. When they arrived I allowed them to have a few hours together to get settled. The children relaxed and had some food. They were made welcome and allowed to talk to others. This family protected each other.

I think that the older ones felt responsible for their younger siblings. I showed them where they would sleep and the play room. They were a typical example of the families coming to the house. On those occasions you had to be very sensitive in handling the families. A member of staff would have given them biscuits and a cup of tea. The social worker would speak to the person who was in charge of the unit directly.

Daily Routine

- 70. The children would get up between approximately seven thirty and eight thirty in the mornings. Some of them were very good at getting up, others weren't just like in any family. You would have to call them several times. They would have a wash before breakfast, the usual. They got ready to go out to school. You would make sure they had all of their books. The schools were all very local. We would walk down the avenue with the younger ones. The older ones just took off themselves. The children didn't need to get buses to school. I recall there was one family who we accompanied to school. The children returned to the house for dinner because the schools were so local. They practically ran back to the house for their dinner. They would have breakfast and dinner.
- 71. When they came back from school at about 3.30pm the boys dived out of their school uniforms into their football strips. We gave them milk or juice and biscuits as a stop gap before their supper. We were very lucky because we had a great cook. The children would scrape their plates. They got seconds. They were lucky, very lucky. I haven't got a clear recollection of any children refusing food. I remember children coming into care and the staff would say "when are they going to stop eating all of these slices of bread?" I would let them eat as many slices of bread as they wanted because they were so craving food and security. The children maybe got security from the bread. It dwindled off and they went back to natural, normal eating.
- 72. The children had rooms. They were in single rooms with little divisions. They were lovely with the little curtains. It was nice for the older ones they liked that. There

could be six or eight children to a room. There were sometimes less in each room. The rooms were separate for girls and boys. The bedtime was age appropriate. It would be half past six for the younger ones. I would have had a few older teenagers who were between fourteen and sixteen. They were reluctant to go to bed. The children had little lockers for their little bits and pieces.

Bedwetting

73. There would have been difficulty with some children. I can't remember any older ones. It would have been more common in five or six year olds. The odd one but nothing major. If you knew the child well, you may have lifted them very lightly out of bed and taken them to the toilet for their own comfort. They would have slept more comfortably. Sometimes it didn't work. It would be mainly be the sister in each unit who would responsible for it. I slept near the unit. If we were absent or on holiday it would be a member of lay staff who would sleep in. The children didn't have to seek permission to go to the toilet.

Washing and bathing

74. Apart from the wash in the morning, I don't think we had showers back then. The younger ones would have been assisted by the care staff and some of the older ones had to be kept a discrete eye on. You would be about to make sure everything was okay. The children were all bathed individually. They weren't bathed in groups. They were bathed a number of times per week.

Leisure

75. In terms of leisure time, the boys were mostly Celtic supporters and would be out playing football. The girls did their own thing. The younger ones liked to play outside on the swings. The older ones would be reading books or the other children would watch the TV. They all had their own toys. We didn't have a formal library but we had lots of books and comics. There were communal toys too. There were organised activities for the children like guides, boy scouts. We had a large hall. I remember a

lady used to come in to teach the girls Scottish country dancing. A younger lady came in and taught Irish step dancing. There was a gentleman who used to teach some of them the violin. It would mainly be the girls. They were involved in quite a lot of things. The staff took them into town to the cinema to see films like King Kong. They would have been taken to the swimming baths.

Trips

- 76. We took them on holiday to Girvan and they would swim in the sea. We lived were right opposite the sea. On one occasion, we took a group to London on the train. It was something to do with the Queen's birthday and we got an invite. We took a group of children. I remember we were dreading the long journey. We stayed in our place in Finchley. We stayed there for the night and slept on mattresses on the floor. They children went on the underground trains. We made sure they all wore something tartan so we could keep an eye on them. There were thousands of children there and there were huge crowds in London. They loved it. They were outstandingly well behaved on that trip. They were impeccably well behaved. I told them I was so proud of them. They asked "was I good?" and I said "of course you were good."
- 77. The children loved going on the trips to Girvan. It was a regular holiday. We had access to a house there which, I think, had been bought by the Catholic Children's Society. We would get a call to say it was vacant for maybe the mid-term break. We would take a small group down. It was like a guest house. They went to the swimming pool every day and to the cinema. Everything was very localised. We had care staff with us on those holidays. They had lovely holidays there.

Schooling

78. The primary and secondary schools were all very local. If there was an issue with a child at school we would receive a call from the school. We go and visit them and talk it through. Occasionally children would be wrongly blamed for something because they had come from the home. I would be there to set it right.

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79. We would have been there to take the place of the parents. We would go to parents' evenings. We would also go to First Holy Communions and Confirmations. We would be there to take the place of the parents. I have no clear memory of any parents coming to First Holy Communions or Confirmations. It would have been the social work side of things who dealt with that. The children sometimes went into a quiet room in the unit to do their homework. They would sometimes go into their bedroom. We would assist the children with their homework. I have no recollection of the children in my care going to the main house for cooking skills. We didn't really have much in the way of facilities in the unit for cooking.

Health and medical care

- 80. The doctors would visit on a weekly basis. They would be visiting the care home for the elderly. We would have access to that. They would come to visit the children in the home so they had access to medical care. I think that there were a lot of checks done at school too. They would have checks with hair for head lice.
- 81. I remember there was boy called **Example** He had special needs so he went to a special school. He made the grade the second year so he went to the mainstream school. He was lovely. He once told me that the nurse had been in and told him that had a "bazooka and two acorns". He would never have heard of a verruca. They did dental checks at school as well.
- 82. I don't remember any of the children having to go to hospital. I don't remember anybody having a broken bone or anything like that. I don't remember having to take any child to the hospital either. The social worker department would have advised us of any particular medical problems that a child might have had.
- 83. I can remember there was one family of three little boys who came to stay. Both parents were alcoholics. The social worker arrived with quite a substantial amount of medication. One of the boys was asthmatic. He was a lovely kid. He felt very responsible for his younger brothers. Their mother wasn't ever free of alcohol abuse.

He was very anxious and suffered quite a lot of asthma attacks. We kept it calm and gradually he didn't need the medication. He settled and felt secure. The family were allowed home for the weekend. He came back and couldn't even breathe. He relapsed. Somebody later told me that he had died in his teens. It didn't surprise me. I had moved on by then.

84. There were no deaths when I was there. There definitely were not any deaths when I was there. I don't know of any unit where a child died.

Religion

- 85. We weren't equipped to teach the children religion. It would have been a subject at school. They were taught religion at school. We took the children to a church around the corner to a children's' mass once per week. It would have been after our own mass so it was at about ten or eleven o'clock. It would be a late morning mass or something like that. It was a choice for the children if they wanted to go. I would take my unit. I would say there were all Catholic. There were masses nearly every hour back then
- 86. There was one little family who came in for a brief period of time. The father was very unhappy at them being there. He didn't visit them. They were nice kids. The mother had gone. They were very small children. There were three of four of them. They were placed elsewhere. It suited the father. They didn't come with us to mass as they were too small. They were young children. We wouldn't have dreamed of taking them to mass.

Manual work

87. I think the children did little jobs especially at the weekends. They did things like setting tables and counting how many were going to be there. They loved doing those things. They loved helping us. It was just small jobs, nothing major. They never did any laundry. I think one or two children sometimes answered the telephone. I

think Sister Margaret gave them a little bit of extra pocket money for doing these little jobs. They loved that.

Christmas

- 88. At Christmas time we would put up decorations. The bigger children would help put up the decorations. They liked to help. They would offer to help on a Saturday morning when everything would be quiet and I would be there on my own. They loved to be around you.
- 89. The people of Glasgow showed extreme generosity, particularly the larger stores. The children got a huge amount at Christmas. If somebody handed in a bag of lovely stuff we made sure we kept some by for birthdays. We made sure that they had lots of things. They had more than any child would have had at home. They were extremely lucky, they got absolutely fabulous stuff.
- 90. They would be invited to multiple parties. They were organised parties. They would invite the children. There would children from other care homes there. I think they went to a store in Glasgow called Lewis'. There would be a few of the local celebrities there too, like Rangers or Celtic players. We would all be in the one area. They would get lovely food and presents. We would go with them. They were always under our supervision.

Birthdays

91. On their birthdays the children would ask for a cake in the shape of a Celtic jersey. Sister LNO would be able to do this but would ask to be told a week in advance. She was that type of person. They would get whatever they wanted. They could invite friends in to their parties from school. They were free to do that if they wanted.

Visits

- 92. I used to know the Children's Act very well. Some of the children were not allowed to have any contact with any family member. We would have been informed by social work and would have to religiously obey that to protect the child. They weren't allowed by virtue of a particular section of the Act. Some of them, if the situation improved or the parents had made promises, would be allowed home. It might have fallen through very rapidly and others managed very well. The children who went home often came back on a Sunday evening. There was one family who came back crawling with lice. We would be there bath side until ten o'clock. We had to keep them nice and clean for school the next morning. We had to treat the head and there wouldn't be a trace of them. It was very hard on them and they would be very tired. You would leave them in bed because they would be so exhausted. I did that many times.
- 93. Those who were allowed to have family visits could visit the home. Invariably it would be at weekends or afternoon visits. Some of the families could be very disruptive. I don't recall any staff member having to be with them. There was a holistic approach if the parents had made some attempt to stay off the drink.
- 94. There was one family I remember, the father was a very bad alcoholic. He would be shouting and screaming at the door. I would tell them "your dad is here, he wants to see you." The dad turned up drunk and was being abusive. The children said "you tell him that we don't want to see him for what he did to my mother." The mother died in the end. We would have to ring the police and they would move him on. It was very upsetting for them.
- 95. There were routine visits from social workers for case reviews. If social workers came they would speak to the children too. Occasionally there would be placements for children in foster homes. There would have been a lot more people involved. The case review would be held in a room at Nazareth House. There would have been a room available. There were regular case reviews. If there were older children the social worker would speak to them too. They obviously dealt with the parents at

home but in a lot of cases that wasn't possible. Some of them were extremely difficult and there could be threatening behaviour.

Inspections

- 96. I am asked about inspections during my time there. There were regular inspections from the order to make sure that everything was okay. They would speak to the sisters and the children. They would have a chat with them. I don't remember staff having to be there. There would have been a general report to the superior. We would have known what had been in the report. There may have been the refurbishment of a building.
- 97. I don't know what other inspections we would have had apart from visits from social services to see the children. I don't recollect inspections from social work. I don't remember anybody coming in.

Family

- 98. In terms of maintaining contact with their families, some of the children might have had contact with older siblings who were married or something. There were well intentioned families who would want to take a child for the weekend. All of the children had some contact with their families. I had some families who had been reunited with their parents. I didn't have any teenagers who would actually be leaving care. I can't remember children sending birthday cards to their mothers or anybody like that.
- 99. All of the children had some contact with their families. I don't remember if children wrote letters to their families. I can't remember any children sending birthday cards to their mothers or anything like that.

Access to children

100. I have been asked if people other than sisters and care staff who had access to children. I mentioned the dancing teacher and violin earlier. I can't remember their names. There were well intentioned families who would have wanted to take a child out for the weekend. I didn't have any children in my group who went to stay with a family. There was one occasion I was aware of one little girl who had been very vocal which was great about something that had happened and the visit was stopped immediately. It wasn't in my unit but social work would have been made aware.

Children leaving Nazareth House

101. I personally didn't have a child who left Nazareth House. I had families who had been reunited with their parents or grandfathers. I remember one family were reunited with their parents but unfortunately they had to be returned. I think they were glad about that. I don't remember any specific child in my unit going to foster carers when I was there. I think one or two went to grandparents who are capable of looking after them. I didn't have any teenagers who were actually leaving care. They never reached that age. I think if they were leaving they would have been going on somewhere else.

Discipline and Punishment

- 102. In terms of discipline and punishment in Nazareth House in Glasgow, we weren't allowed to deprive them of all of their pocket money. We would withdraw a little bit of it. That was a terrible thing to do. They might have to be told to go to their rooms and told that they couldn't watch their favourite programme. You would keep popping in and out to make sure they weren't throwing pillows out of the window or anything like that. We would have kept progress reports which would include issues, should they be good or bad. It might include things that might have happened or incidents.
- 103. The types of things that might result in children having to be punished would be where they were disruptive. I remember there was one kid, who was in his early

teens, he could be quite disruptive and annoying to other children. He had rings in his nose and wore a padlock around his neck. He would disappear. I would wonder where he had gone. He was outside. I heard a rustle in a tree and I looked up. I asked him what he was doing. He was up in the tree. He would be hiding up there. I think that was his way of dealing with being out of sorts with you. The children didn't like being out of sorts with you.

- 104. If children were disruptive to other kids and they had been told several times but they continued doing it you would then have to take action. It would mainly be stuff like that. I can't think of anything major in the ones I looked after. They would have gone to school. I didn't look after any children who refused to go to school.
- 105. There might be kids might take a notion to run away but they wouldn't get very far. You would be concerned especially if it was night time and you might contact the police. They would usually find them and bring them back. There weren't any sanctions for them running away. There wasn't a lot you could do apart from talk to them. They just didn't see danger.
- 106. I wasn't aware of any corporal punishment. I am asked if any child ever spoke to me about anything happening to them. I didn't receive any complaints from children about discipline. I remember telling one lad off for telling lies about his brother. I told him that he must say sorry to his brother. He wouldn't. He punched me. There were the normal naughty things that children would do. I don't remember there being a specific discipline book. We would have recorded them in the reports we were writing about the children.
- 107. I didn't see any behaviour that would constitute abuse of children. I didn't get any reports from children that they were being bullied. There were normal fights. It would be stuff on the periphery that you could deal with. I am asked if a child was abused or was being treated badly, whether there was somebody they could confide in. They would have been able to tell somebody. They definitely would. I didn't deal with older boys in their teens. I think most of them had confidence in the care that they had

because there was good continuity. I don't remember anything untoward. There was no real physical, sexual or any other type of abuse when I was there.

Children who may have been at Nazareth House when I was there

108. I am asked about various children who may have been at Nazareth House when I was there and who I am told have made allegations.



- 109. I am asked if I remember a girl called **LCT** I definitely don't know that name. I am told that the Inquiry has information that suggests that she was at Nazareth House from 1965 to 1975. I definitely don't remember her at all. I am told that there is information from her which says that she had to sleep with her arms crossed over her chest, that the nuns would check in the middle of the night that children were lying with their arms crossed, that if the nuns found them sleeping in a different position, they would be woken up and given into trouble. How do you keep your arms in the same position when you are asleep? It doesn't make any sense to me.
- 110. I am told that she says about bed-wetting that she remembers a few kids would just wet the bed because they were terrified to go to the toilet, that the nuns would grab the child out the bed, they would take the sheets off, the child would have the sheets wrapped round them and made to go and have a cold shower. There weren't showers when I was in Glasgow.
- 111. I am asked if Sister **LFL** was there. I know of the name. She was there many, many years before I came to Glasgow. She wasn't there during my time in Glasgow. She was before my time. She was either deceased or very elderly at that stage.

LHA I am asked if I know a Sister I am told she has been described as being in 112. charge, There was nobody with a There was definitely not someone of that description. There was no Sister LHA when I was there unless there was somebody who changed her name. I am told that there is reference to Sister LCT LHA using a spoon to force feed if she refused to eat anything, that if she was sick while they were force feeding her, they would scoop sick up with the food and shove it back in her mouth. I would say that definitely didn't happen. The forced feeding is totally alien to me. The children loved their food.

- LCT 113. also suggests that birthdays were not celebrated in Nazareth House. She says that she thinks that is why she has difficulty in remembering exactly when things happened because she didn't know her exact age. Again, that doesn't accord with my recollection. She also makes reference to a yearly trip in taxis to Troon for the day. I remember the trips. The trip was another big event in Glasgow. There would be a specific day in June and all the children in care would go. It was a wonderful day. I can remember that each one of us was assigned to three or four children in a taxi with the taxi driver. The children got a box of goodies. They had a great day and there were concerts. It was a regular occurrence. She has said that they were given a shoebox with sweeties and that these would be taken off them as soon as they got back to the home. She has said that she used to eat it all on the way so that they couldn't be taken from her. I was there during each of those annual outings. The box was akin to a shoe box and they got lovely fruit and biscuits and sweets. It was theirs. It wasn't taken off of them.
- LCT says in relation to medical care that she had to go and 114. I am told that to get a jag for going to school. She has stated that she can LKQ see a Dr LKQ She says that she was scared, she remember Dr and was greeting and lashed out, that three people had to hold her down while Dr LKQ gave her the injection, that he was not gentle, that he whacked the needle into her backside and she couldn't sit down for a week. She has said that after that she was terrified of getting an injection. I can remember Dr LKQ and taking kids to him. I remember would be there. I don't remember children getting a jab in

the bottom. She also says she remembers being taken to the dentist and having teeth removed and having canine teeth taken out by mistake. I don't know anything about that either.

- 115. I have been asked about a woman called LKB who worked in Nazareth House. I remember her. She was one of the care staff. I didn't work with her so I wouldn't have known about what went on. She worked in a different unit. I am told that LCT speaks of LKB smacking her once. I definitely don't know anything about that.
- 116. I am asked if there were any deaths of nuns when I was in Glasgow. I am told that there is also information that she was made to kiss a dead nun on the head in her coffin. I have no idea if any sister died. I have no recollection of a sister dying when I was there. It wouldn't have impacted on the children. The children wouldn't have had anything to do with death or dying. I am told that she also has said that she worked in the old folk's home in Nazareth House instead of going to school. I have no knowledge of any children working over there.
- 117. I have been asked about Sister LJS I remember Sister LJS She changed her name it **E** She died in the states.
- 118. I am told that **LCT** has said that "I told Sister **LJS** that I had hurt myself, that I was bleeding underneath. I had taken my period. I had not been told about periods and I had no idea what was happening to me. Sister **LJS** put me in a bath. She took all my clothes off and I was standing nude in front of her. I felt humiliated. She filled the bath with disinfectant and she scrubbed me with a scrubbing brush. It was brush that was used to scrub the floors. She scrubbed me from head to toe. My skin was red raw. My whole body was sore. She told me that she had to clean my sins away. I don't know what they thought I had been doing when I was away."
- 119. I am asked if I remember anything about that incident. I never heard anything like that. I do not remember a thing about that. I do not remember ever hearing about that. Sister LJS was the kindliest soul, most gentle person you could meet.

- LDI LCT also alleges that 120. I am told that sexually abused her. I LFO and LFN am told that she says that she was taken out on holiday by don't remember either of them. The name means nothing to me. She says that "it had been a good holiday. I remember playing with LDI beside some water. I ended up in the water. Apparently I nearly drowned. When I came to, I was lying on LFN standing over me. I thought that he had saved my the grass and I saw life. I got taken to hospital as they had to pump my chest to get rid of the water. She LDI and I slept on the floor of the caravan and LFN and goes on to say " slept in the bed. I remember walking in and LFO LFO was lying on the bed and I saw her boobs. I had never seen a woman's boobs before. On this one occasion, left the room. I don't know where she went. LFN then came down to the floor LFO LDI and sexually abused me. After he was finished with me, he moved onto
- 121. I am told that she has said of reporting the abuse to the nuns that *"I told them that he has abused me. The nuns did not believe me. They called me a liar and a troublemaker. I was told I should be thankful that someone had chosen to take me out on holiday. I was told to go down to the chapel. I was told to say ten Our Fathers and twenty Hail Marys. I wasn't lying. It hurt me so much. I learned to keep my mouth shut. I don't know how old I was at this time. I never heard of anything like that.*

Records

122. I don't know exactly when Nazareth House Glasgow closed. I have been asked about my knowledge of individual records. I presume that the records would be centralised at head office. They would be kept somewhere. I can't be sure.

Final thoughts

- 123. I am shocked by the allegations. I am not aware of any police investigations in relation to either home. When I left they were still operating as a children's home.
- 124. I am asked if I can explain why the allegations I have been told about have been made, if they did not happen. I can only assume that people would have access to other Inquiries in Southern or Northern Ireland. There must be some people who hear things and they do 'copy- cat' style things. I am not saying none of it happened but I think there is an element of 'copy-cat' behaviour.
- 125. I think life was hard. I think that things were tougher with little staff. I was trying to take the place of a parent to some degree. There were children who would say 'I wish you were my mammy'. What do you say to a nine year old who says that to you?
- 126. I loved the work. I loved the challenge of it. I did know that I did my best. I can only speak for myself. I am very upset by the allegations which I have been asked to comment on. We weren't angels but we tried to discipline in the very normal manner. We were trying to take the place of very dysfunctional parents. We tried to do our best to protect these children and to give them as normal a life as possible whilst in care.

GLASGOW

- 127. It was an extremely happy time in Glasgow. I loved every minute of it. I loved the naughty ones most of all because it wasn't their fault.
- 128. I have kept a number of photographs of my time in Nazareth House, in both homes. I would be prepared to make these available to the Inquiry if they wished.
- 129. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence by mE, to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

	LGS	
Signe		
Dated	24th. February 2018.	
<u>.</u>		
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