

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Sister [REDACTED] LKR

Support person present: Yes

Others present:

Denis Moloney from Donnelly and Wall Solicitors representing the witness

Una Conway from Donnelly and Wall Solicitors representing the witness

Megan Lafferty from Clyde and Co Solicitors representing the order

1. My name is Sister [REDACTED] LKR I am known now as Sister [REDACTED] LKR which is my religious name. I was also known as Sister [REDACTED] LKR from 1952 until 1990. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1934. I am 83 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### The Sisters of Nazareth

2. I joined the congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth in 1952 and I have been with them since then.
3. I went to Hammersmith in 1952 which was where I received my first training. That was spiritual training. I then went to Swansea in 1954 and on to Finchley in 1956 where I did my nursery training over the following two years. I completed my National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB) in 1958. That was for caring for 0-5 year olds.
4. I then moved between Birkenhead, Newcastle and Southampton before going to Lancaster which is where I was first involved in caring for children. I think I was at Lancaster from about 1968 or 1969 for about six or seven years.

5. Around 1976 I spent a few months at Derry then went on to Glasgow and started at Cardonald House, which was further childcare. I spent two years at Cardonald House, from 1977 to 1979, and then I went to Oxford. I came back to Scotland and went to Bonnyrigg, Lasswade from about 1981 until about 1983. I was back at Cardonald House in 1983 and again in 1998 but that was for reception and collecting. I stayed there but there were no children there at all then. I have also been at Isleworth in London, Wrexham and I was in California, from 2003 until 2015. I then returned to Ireland, and I'm at Fahan near Donegal now.

### **Training provided for working with children.**

6. I completed the two year NNEB child care training for 0-5 year olds in 1958. I also completed another child care course in Liverpool when I was at Birkenhead. When I arrived at Cardonald House I had a total of about seven years experience in caring for children.

### **Nazareth House Children's Home, Cardonald House, Glasgow - 1977 – 1979**

#### *General*

7. The first time I went to Cardonald House was in 1977 and I went for a two year period. I remember it was a big house and there was a children's section which was being renovated at the time, but we were in the main building. Up until that time the children had been in dormitories. To start with there was a purpose built building for one group of children which the diocese built. The rest of the house was then being renovated to accommodate another two groups of children.
8. We were all in the one main building but it was divided up as there was also a section for the elderly as well. There was a section for the nuns to stay in and the section for the children. No staff stayed there at that time.

9. No other adults had any access to the children. I had two staff and two housekeepers and they were all female. I can only remember one member of staff and she was called Angela. With the exception of James Holywood who drove the minibus for trips and holidays, the staff were all female.
10. My role when I went to Cardonald House was that of house mother to the children. The children I looked after were aged between, about three or four up to maybe twelve. There were between fourteen and sixteen in the group and it was boys and girls. I was in charge of that group.
11. I don't remember anyone leaving the group while I was there, as far as I remember it was the same group of children I looked after for the whole time I was there. My group didn't have a name.
12. There were two other groups in that section and the children in those groups might have been a bit older. Some of them would have been thirteen or maybe fourteen years old and they were similar sizes of groups. The nuns in charge of the other groups were Sister [REDACTED] and Sister LJS
13. There were our three groups and I think there was another group on its own. I think the other group was partly new and it was Sister LJO that was in charge of that group at the time I was there. She's since died.
14. The Mother Superior at the home when I was there was Sister LKO We were a community so there were many other nuns, they are all in heaven. I remember Sister LVP Sister Evangelista and there was Sister Oregaen, I can't remember all of them now.

*First day for children*

15. When children came for the first time I would always be there. They would come and meet the group with whoever brought them would stay with them. That could be a relative or a social worker. I would meet them myself or with the staff.

16. My group was the youngest group so they were all aged between about four and twelve. There was once a little girl, [REDACTED], who came to the group who was only about five or six months old and she was in my group. She wasn't with us long as the social work decided she could go home. That didn't work out and she was fostered.
17. Children that were taken in to the group could be very upset but the other children were very supportive of them. Some of the children I remember are [REDACTED] and her sister [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

#### *Daily routine*

18. We saw to the children getting up in the morning at 7.30. It would be me and the staff that would wake them. I would be up at 6:00 am as I had mass before waking the children. There was no bell I just went in, there was usually someone awake. My room was just across the corridor from the children's rooms and there was a washroom there as well. There were no other nuns staying in that section just me.
19. We saw to the young ones getting washed and dressed. If not me then it would be staff as there were usually two of them on duty as well. When the children were ready we took them down to breakfast.
20. After breakfast we would walk them round to the school. After school they would come home at about 3:30 pm. They would get changed out of their uniforms, have a drink and go out to play. They wore whatever they had to wear. Some wore what they had brought with them, some wore what the home had supplied. They had their dinner around about 5:00 pm.

#### *Sleeping arrangements*

21. At the stage I was there, renovations were going on and because of that we had two separate groups of boys and girls. They were split up and the boys slept in one

section and the girls in another section. Maybe seven in each group. All ages slept in the same area and they got on well.

22. There were brothers and sisters in my group and they were always kept together if possible.
23. Bedtime would be 7:00 pm with the youngest ones and they would have a drink first. The older ones would go to bed before 9:00 pm. Lights out was at 9 o'clock.
24. There were no difficulties with bed times, the odd time somebody would be sick however I would hear if someone wasn't sleeping. I kept my bedroom door ajar and the boys and girls bedroom doors were kept ajar. I was just across the corridor so I would get up if I heard a child crying and I would do whatever was necessary to tend to them.

#### *Washing and bathing*

25. The children would shower every night before bed. We had no baths in our section because of the renovation, so if a child needed a bath they would need to go to a bathroom in another section of the house. I would help dry the children then they wouldn't go straight to bed, they would wait for a little while. When they did go to bed I would stay with them in their rooms for a while.

#### *Food*

26. The meals came in on a trolley from the central kitchen, where all the meals were cooked for everyone at Cardonald. I would watch over the children at breakfast, to see what they needed. I or perhaps another staff member would say grace before meals, with all the children.
27. During the week it was usually a fried breakfast, bacon and sausage, or the like. At the weekend they would have some cereal or porridge.

28. Lunch was at school and tea was about 5:00 pm. The children always ate together and the nuns would all eat later at about 6:30 pm – 7:00 pm. It was a cooked meal through the week, spaghetti, chips or that kind of thing and Sunday was a cold meal, like a salad. The kids did like the food.

#### *Clothes*

29. The children had the uniform the home provided for school. They also had whatever clothes they came in with and the home could provide further clothing if needed.
30. The clothing was always washed, the laundry was done daily. We had a washing machine and any of the staff would do that. It was their everyday clothes, their school uniform and their under bedding, everything.

#### *Healthcare*

31. If the children were ever sick or unwell there was a doctor that came into the house weekly. [REDACTED]. It was a Doctor [REDACTED] LKQ/LVV . It was more to see the elderly residents but they would see the children, if need be.
32. The children had health checks as well and Doctor [REDACTED] LKQ/LVV did them as well. Every child had a big white Medical Card with their name and all their particulars, and inside there was a line to write on, when they were seen. We kept them in a cabinet locked away in my room.
33. The dentist was just down the road and the children just went whenever they had to.
34. No children passed away while I was at Cardonald House.

35. There weren't really any inspections of the children for cleanliness or for their clothes. We did check their heads for lice as there would be families coming in with dirty heads. Every child was checked, that was always the case. I usually did the checking myself. I would go through their head and you could see the lice at a glance, you would also see the child scratching.
36. We would give the child a bath and wash their hair and we'd always have 'Sulio', the medication for the lice that we got from the chemist. You would rub it into their hair.
37. Their hair was not washed with a disinfectant it was just washed and then we applied the medication. There was a special comb and I would just comb it and the lice would come off on the comb. It was a steel comb and the children would often say that it hurts, which I'm sure it did because their heads were a bit tender.

#### *Leisure time*

38. At the weekends the staff would take the children out. They would go to the shops or the park, sometimes relatives would come for the day and then the children would be allowed to do their own thing.

#### *Work / chores*

39. The children would help with just keeping the place tidy. The washing and drying up. They would need to be asked to help, but there was no rota. There was no polishing floors. Some made beds, after a fashion, but if not we would just make them.

#### *Possessions and pocket money*

40. If the children had any possessions they kept them in their bedrooms, in lockers, next to their beds.

*Holidays and trips*

41. Once a year we went away on a summer holiday. One year we went to Girvan, another year we went to Dumfries. Usually two of the groups went away together. There was a house that the diocese had and the children enjoyed those holidays. We went walks with them and took them down to the beach, which they loved. We only went for a week so it passed by quickly. We went in a minibus, James Holywood the only male staff member was the driver.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

42. We knew all the children's birthdays, usually we had a good time. We would always have a cake for them and we would play games with them.
43. Christmas was a good time because people were very generous with gifts and parties for the children. There were presents handed into the home every year. The children all got a meal in the house and presents to keep at Christmas.

*Bed-wetting*

44. Some children used to wet beds, we would change them and wash the sheets and put them back to bed. Sometimes we would encourage them and reward them with a treat if they had a dry night. There was never any punishment, just get the sheets off and change them, that was it.

*Schooling*

45. The children wore a uniform to school, it was provided by the home. They were to be at school for 9:00 am o'clock and we just walked them round as it was just next door, in the same grounds. It was the Holy Rosary Primary School.



46. There were one or two older ones who went to Lourdes Secondary School in Cardonald which was also just next door.
47. If the children were too young for school, then one of the staff or myself would be with them in the sitting room. They would be crayoning, reading stories or perhaps watching something on television. That was more to do with the staff than me.
48. I don't remember the children that were at the school ever having homework.

*Religious instruction*

49. We had prayers after grace at every mealtime. Sunday Mass was in the parish church, not in the chapel. We had a chapel at Cardonald but it was thought better to go to the parish church. There was no other religion taught to the children and the children were not expected to be religious.

*Visits from family and friends*

50. Family could come in anytime, there was no appointment needed. It was mostly weekends though. If the parents wanted to, they could take the children out but they wouldn't have stayed over with their families. I don't remember that ever happening, they would have needed permission. The children didn't really have any other visitors.

*Visits from social workers / inspections*

51. The social work would visit to see how children were doing. They just came to see them, there was no appointments needed. I've no recollection of any inspections, not in Scotland anyway. I do remember it in England but not in Scotland.

*Records and record keeping*

52. We kept a Log Book as well as the Medical Card for the children. It was just for recording different things that happened, events or if we went somewhere special for the day. I also recorded when new kids arrived and left.
53. The birthdays of the children were also recorded in the Log Book. There were no records made of punishments. There used to be a record of punishments, in another house, not Glasgow, I can't remember recording any punishments in Glasgow.
54. I kept the Log Book, in my room, I left it there, in the room, for whoever came after me. It was the same with the white Medical Cards, they were left in my room.
55. The home didn't have any other papers or files on any of the children.

*Discipline and punishment*

56. I have no memory of any rules or a code of behaviour that the children had to adhere to. I think I would remember if we had that. Children would get up to tricks and if so, we would maybe deprive them of something, maybe a treat perhaps. I can't really think if there were any other forms of discipline used at that time. Maybe they wouldn't get all their pocket money. I can't remember how much pocket money they got.
57. Once we got this treat from British Airways. We were going down to the south of England for the day, in a plane, to see the dolphins. We were invited to go down along with other groups and other schools from all over Glasgow, for handicapped children. I took four children from our group. David Attenborough was on the plane with us as well.
58. Well, this boy [REDACTED] had been naughty and I told him there was a treat coming off so he promised to be good. He knew he wouldn't get to go if he

misbehaved and anyway, in the meantime, he broke his promise and missed out on the trip. I can't remember what he did but that was his punishment.

59. The children were never excluded from any meals and they were never locked in their rooms. There was no corporal punishment. I don't recall anyone ever smacking a child. I don't remember anything like that.
60. If there was some programme on the television that they liked then if they had misbehaved, we might stop them from watching it. I can't just think off hand of anything else but there was no physical punishment at all.
61. If I'd seen anything like that happening I would have spoken to whoever carried it out. I never saw a child being smacked or hit, nothing like that at all.

*Children leaving Cardonald House*

62. The social work would arrange a child leaving the home. It would never be the home that would make the decision for a child to leave. Reasons a child would leave would be maybe to go back to family or relatives or perhaps to foster care.
63. They could have been adopted but I don't remember any child being adopted. The social work would tell us in advance when a child was leaving and the child would be told as well. They were never told on the day they were to leave. If a child was leaving who had siblings in the home then they all went, everyone from that family went together.
64. I wasn't involved in speaking with the children before they left the home. I didn't talk to them about what they were going to do once they left, that was all done by the social worker. The children would pack up their possessions and move on. The social work would take them away. We didn't give them any money.

65. After they left Cardonald none of the children kept in touch with me and I didn't keep in touch with them.

### Abuse at Nazareth House, Cardonald 1977 – 1979

#### *Recollections of nuns and staff*

66. I have been advised that a number of children who stayed at Nazareth House, Cardonald, have made allegations of abuse against other nuns and/or staff. You have asked me if remember Sister LHZ Sister LGC Sister LGD Sister LHW LFFV a worker, Joe Duffy, another worker, Sister LFL and Sister LHA. I have no recollection of any of these people.

67. You have told me that some of the people you have just named allegedly physically abused children who were in care at Cardonald during the time I was there. That children were slapped, hit with sticks and rulers, that they were kicked and that they were knocked to the ground. I don't remember any of those people, and I didn't see anything like that, never. You have told me there are allegations that children had their mouths washed out with carbolic soap. I can't imagine anything like that. We didn't have carbolic soap.

#### *Recollections of staff members LFFV and Joe Duffy*

68. You say there have been allegations of sexual abuse and that LFFV and Joe Duffy were allegedly responsible. I don't know those names and I know nothing about that at all.

*Recollections of Sister* [REDACTED] LJS

69. I remember Sister [REDACTED] LJS I remember she was in charge of one of the other groups when I was at Cardonald. She was about the same age as me. She died in California.
70. You have made me aware of allegations of abuse that have been made against Sister [REDACTED] LJS and that she scrubbed a child all over her body and face with a scrubbing brush. I know nothing about that, I can't imagine it. She wasn't that kind of person.

*Specific Allegations made to the Inquiry* – [REDACTED] LBC

71. I remember [REDACTED] LBC She was at Cardonald when I first went there in 1977 and she was part of my group. I suppose she was about eight or nine. She had an older sister, [REDACTED] who was in the group as well. [REDACTED] was a year or two older.
72. In her statement [REDACTED] LBC has made various allegations of abuse against me. She said "*if you did not eat a meal, the same meal was put out again for you to finish at the next meal*". That never happened.
73. [REDACTED] LBC has alleged, "*on occasion if a child did not eat their food they would be force fed with a spoon*". Never, never, did that happen.
74. She has also said that I "*held her by her nose, opened her mouth and fed her pieces of meat*". Never. I never did that. They all ate so well, they couldn't get enough.
75. [REDACTED] LBC states that there "*was once sick on her plate and was told to lick her plate*". Never, never, I never saw that happen, I never remember seeing anyone being sick.

76. In her statement [REDACTED] LBC says that *"At Christmas one year she got a teddy bear as a present and it was then taken away"*. I don't believe that either. Further *"Christmas Day revolved around Mass and prayers and there wasn't much else made of the rest of the day."* Christmas Day was always made very special for them. It wasn't all prayers, no.
77. She says I *"was in the habit of checking beds to see if they were wet in the morning and the [REDACTED] was in the habit of wetting her bed"*. I do remember that, yes. If the bed was wet I would rip the sheets off and make up the bed. As the children got up we would just look at the sheets and if it was wet we would take the sheets off and replace them. There was no big sermon or anything. It would be me and usually two staff that would deal with it.
78. [REDACTED] LBC has said that [REDACTED] *would be ordered to get out of the bed, she would be pulled away by the hair and taken to the toilet, and, on occasion, locked in a boiler room"*. Never. There was no boiler room.
79. In her statement [REDACTED] LBC said that she was on occasions *"dragged from the bedroom and hit with a belt, a hairbrush or a tennis racket"*. No, that never happened.
80. On one occasion she remembers *"holding on to a radiator when she was being dragged from the bedroom and the lid of the radiator came off but she continued to be dragged along the floor"*. She says she was then *"put in a toilet and left overnight but before being left in the toilet being beaten"*. I never saw that, no, never anything like that.
81. She further states *"children, particularly the girls, would have their underwear inspected to see if it was clean or not, and if it wasn't clean they would be smacked"*. I don't recall anything like that.
82. [REDACTED] LBC didn't misbehave as far as I remember. Her sister would have done, but not [REDACTED] LBC [REDACTED] was a Tomboy and you never knew what she'd be up to next. I just

can't think of an example but she was just the opposite to [REDACTED] who was bright and cheery.

83. [REDACTED] recalls an occasion when she was about nine years of age when she *"took a puff of a cigarette that was sitting in an ashtray in the home"* and she says I saw her and *"took her into the shower area at the home and slapped her legs and her back and her bottom"*. No I didn't do that, and I can't understand where she would have got a cigarette.
84. Another occasion she had *"swapped her skirt or clothing with another girl"* and I *"took her to the bedroom and struck her with a belt"*. No, that never happened.
85. She also says she *"swore at me"* and I *"took her to the shower room and used carbolic soap to scrub her face and the inside of her mouth"*. That never happened, I don't remember her ever swearing.
86. [REDACTED] says she was once *"unwell with sickness and diarrhoea and in bed for two days"* and that she *"vomited and dirtied the bed and had to lie in the bed while it was unchanged for two days"* and that I told her to *"change the sheets herself"*. No, that never happened.
87. On another occasion that she *"was out in a field one evening, having a cigarette"* and that I discovered her and *"pulled her through a hedge, took her back inside the house and strapped and punched her before sending her to bed"*. No, that didn't happen.
88. She says she *"once stayed out overnight with a friend and returned the following morning and went to mass"*. After mass I *"started shouting at her for staying out at night"* and that I *"slapped her and called her liar"*. She says I *"took her to a sink in a toilet or bathroom and rubbed carbolic soap into her mouth"*. I didn't do that.
89. I don't remember anything about [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] parents. I don't remember her father ever coming and taking them both out for the day. I don't remember any

restriction on them seeing their parents. I remember at one stage [REDACTED] used to go out with a lady, not her mum, she called her auntie somebody. I don't remember her mother or father at all.

90. If there was a restriction I wouldn't have let them go out with their father, not unless the social worker said so. If they had said it was okay we would have allowed that, so long as the child wanted to go with them.
91. [REDACTED] didn't give me any particular trouble, I thought my relationship with her was perfectly alright, I've seen her since, I've seen her since she got married. She came back to Cardonald to work for Nazareth House. It would have been when I was back there in about 1998. She was there to try and get a job caring for the residents. She recognised me and she was very friendly. I was there overseeing the staff who were looking after a group of eight elderly residents.
92. [REDACTED] seemed pleased to see me and I was pleased to see her. There were no difficulties at all. She didn't accuse me of anything. She told me she was married and where she stayed. I asked how her sister, [REDACTED] was and she said "as always". I knew what she meant. That was the only occasion I saw her and we spoke for maybe five or ten minutes just while passing in the corridor.

*Reporting abuse at Nazareth House, Cardonald*

93. If I had any knowledge of any of the things happening you have spoken about I would have mentioned it to someone in authority. I would have gone to the Mother Superior.
94. If any of the children had any concerns or complaints about the way they felt they were being treated they could report it, I suppose they would tell their social worker. I never spoke to any of the children about anything like that. If I saw any of the children in my care, upset or not behaving as I would expect them to, I would talk to them individually and encourage them to talk to me.



95. I think I had a good relationship with the children I cared for. I remember one wee girl, [REDACTED] she was about eight, and she went to a special school. She couldn't learn in the ordinary school and her speech wasn't very good. Everybody liked her, she was good at singing and could play the piano. I used to encourage the other children to be good to her and they did and she was popular.
96. I don't remember any of the children being unpopular.

### **Nazareth House, Lasswade near Edinburgh 1981 – 1983**

#### *General*

97. I was at Lasswade for about eighteen months. There was a building on its own, the Holycott. I remember there were just the two groups, Holycott 1 and Holycott 2. I suppose I was in Holycott 2, I don't really know. We were all in the building together and the two groups were separated by a corridor.
98. There weren't many children at that time, because the place phased out. I had about ten or twelve children. They aged between seven and about fourteen or fifteen. Like Cardonald, it was mixed and there were brothers and sisters in my group.
99. It was individual rooms there was no dormitories, it was like a private house. The children were in either single or double rooms. Everything was self-contained in the house and we had our own kitchen, living room and dining room.
100. The only nun I remember is Sister [REDACTED] LQD who was working next door, with Holycott 1. She was in charge of them. The only others were two staff and two housekeepers.
101. I don't remember a Sister [REDACTED] LTX at Lasswade, when I was there. I have heard the name so perhaps she was there before me. It closed when I was there so she must

have been before me. I didn't hear the children or other staff or nuns speak of her while I was there.

102. To be honest, Lasswade is a kind of a blank to me. You see, I didn't really go there for the children. I went there to do the collecting for the sisters and then the sister who was with the children was made superior, Sister Joan, who's died since.
103. I was then asked, when I was there, if I would go to Holycott 2. I suppose I was there about a year, maybe less, before that happened.
104. I don't know why I can't remember so much from Lasswade, I just found it a different place and it's all a bit of a blank. I was happy there but I wasn't elated with it. I did prefer Cardonald, I was happier there. I just think Edinburgh is different.

#### **Routine and life at Nazareth House, Lasswade**

##### *Routine*

105. The routine at Lasswade was very similar to Cardonald. The children got up at 7:30 am got washed and changed and went down for breakfast at 8:00 am. The children in my group all went to school.
106. The school was near Dalkeith. They went to school in the uniform that was supplied by the home. They would then come back to the home and change out of the uniform. I don't remember much about homework at Lasswade either.
107. The children went to bed at much the same times as Cardonald. Much of it was just the same as Cardonald. Birthday and Christmas celebrations were just the same and the activities we did with the children were much the same.
108. We did go on a holiday the summer I was at Lasswade. I don't know where it was, somewhere near the seaside.

*Food*

109. The breakfast was much the same as Cardonald. The children had their lunch at school and their tea back at the home.

*Chores*

110. The only chores they had were the usual washing up after their meals. There was no polishing of floors or any work outside in the grounds, nothing like that.

*Religion*

111. We said prayers after Grace at meal times just the same as Cardonald and we went to Mass on Sunday. That was at Nazareth House.

*Visits from family and friends*

112. The visiting was mostly at weekends. Like Cardonald the visitors could come whenever they wanted, but we didn't have a lot of visitors at Lasswade.
113. That was because we had a big family from Liverpool so I suppose it was more difficult for travelling. I can't remember that family name.

*Visits from social workers / inspections*

114. I don't remember any visits from the social work or any inspections.

*Records and record keeping*

115. I don't remember any Log Book or recording any such information at Lasswade. I don't remember any Medical Cards like we had at Cardonald, I don't even remember a doctor being there or visiting.

**Abuse at Nazareth House, Lasswade 1981 – 1983**

116. I didn't see any children being physically punished at Lasswade during the time I was there.

117. This is the first statement I have given regarding anything like this. I have never given a previous statement to the Inquiry or to the police.

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

Signed..... *Sister* LKR .....

Dated..... *17<sup>th</sup> April 2018* .....